US stimulus plan to help RP war vets

HONOLULU—THE SENATE VERSION OF the economic stimulus bill being debated in the US Congress includes $195 million in payments to Filipinos who fought for the United States during World War II.

US Sen. Daniel K. Inouye had arranged for the long-awaited compensation to be included in the proposed measure that is expected to cost up to $1 trillion.

About 200,000 Filipinos served alongside US soldiers to defend the

US SENATE A2

LIFESTYLE / C1

Rustom Padilla is dead; Long live the queen

LIFESTYLE / E2

7 gorgeous friends open resto at Greenbelt 5

LIFESTYLE / F4

Friends celebrate Ernest on first death anniversary

ENTERTAINMENT / G2

Statuesque star and powerful politico are into each other

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Friday, February 6, 2009 ★ Vol. 24 / No. 60 www.inquirer.net

Mystery man gives away money in NYC

NEW YORK—HE WON'T say his name, leaves his last name blank or calls to anyone who asks in the middle of New York.

The mystery benefactor known only as "Baldo at Bill" on Wednes-

MYSTERY A14

Probe of Mike A pushed

Military poised to move on Abus

By Julie S. Alipala
in Zamboanga City
and Jocelyn R. Uy
in Manila

ZAMBOANGA CITY—IT APpears that the military option will be used to rescue the three kidnapped aid workers of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Government troops and civilian volunteers were yesterday positioned around a barangay in Indanan, Sulu, where the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers are believed to be holding their captives, according to an informant of the Inquirer.

MILITARY A6

Businessmen ask solon to probe DOJ 'flip-flop'

By Marlon Ramos

A GROUP OF BUSINESSMEN has called on Camiguin Rep. Pedro Romualdo to look into the "unusual" downgrading by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez of reinstalling charges against a province mate in connection with alleged fraudulent land deals worth P180 million.

TRADERS, KIDS A6

IF IT'S WEDNESDAY, THEN IT MUST BE D.C. From Davos in Switzerland via Milan, Italy, Saudi and Bahrain, President Arroyo arrives in Washington, D.C., at 2 a.m. Feb.5 to meet with key personalities in the Obama administration and possibly, with the new president himself during her one-day working visit to the United States. This caps her dizzying, five-country, seven-day transatlantic trip. She is scheduled to arrive on Saturday. MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Ping to Miriam: Get World Bank report

By Christine O. Avendaño and Michael Lim Ubac

SEN. PANFILO LACSON YESTERDAY URGED Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago to resume looking into the World Bank's blacklisting of three Filipino construction firms so she may subpoena the report implicating President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband in corrupt activities.

Lacson made the call a day after he released to the media "excerpts" of the World Bank report that, he said, had at least 10 witnesses linking First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo, certain politicians and public works officials to collusion in rigged bidding processes.

Among the allegations in the report was that Mike Arroyo was given a 5-percent commission as his share of the 10-15-percent increase in the bidding contract of World Bank-funded projects.

Santiago had held only one hearing last month. She said she would resume the inquiry only if Lacson would be able to produce the witness who told him that one of the blacklisted contractors delivered bribe money to Mike Arroyo's office in 2003.

For his own part, Sen. Mar Roxas called on the President to order an independent investigation of the latest controversy involving her husband.

PROBE A13

Last FedEx plane out of Subic today

By Robert Gonzaga
Inquirer Central Luzon

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—After 14 years of operating in this free port, Federal Express (FedEx), the world's largest express transportation company, is moving its operations starting today to a new facility in China, leaving at least 800 Filipino workers jobless.

"FedEx will move all their planes to Guangzhou ... But there will be no ceremony. We've been hearing reports in the media that they are leaving ... but the truth is, they won't be able to do that in one day," said Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) Administrator Armand Arreza.

LOST A2

Lozada: FG casts very long shadow in gov't

ROAD LESS TRAVELED Jun Lozada marks the first anniversary of his abduction by revisiting the route where cops and Palace security men took him for a ride.

By Nikko Dizon

RODOLFO "JUN" LOZADA KNEW that stories of Jose First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo would be linked to another corruption scandal as he himself had implicated him a year ago in the scuttled $329-million NBN-ZTE deal with China.

Lozada said he was encouraged by revelations from a World Bank report suggesting that the husband of President Macapagal-Arroyo was involved in rigging government projects.

"The First Gentleman cast a very long shadow in government. Just like a shadow, difficult to get a video of; a picture, and evidence. To me, the writing on the wall is here already," Lozada told reporters in a mix of English and Filipino.

Sooner or later, he said, "the dam will burst." What he said surprised him was that Arroyo asked for "only 5 percent."

LOZADA, A13

Metro folk to pay more for water

By Riza T. Olchondra
and TJ Burgonio

HOUSEHOLDS IN METRO Manila and nearby cities and towns in Cavite and Rizal will have to bear higher water bills after all—but only to cover inflation and foreign exchange losses, water providers and the regulator said yesterday.

Last month, the regulator, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), announced that it rejected the petition of two water concessionaires for an increase in their rates effective last month, saying an adjustment was "untimely."

METRO A5

No evidence of bribery, PDEA execs tell probers

By Dona Pazzibugan

OFFICIALS OF THE PHILIPpine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) told an independent probe panel yesterday that they had no direct knowledge that state prosecutors were bribed into dismissing the drug charges against three scions of rich families.

PDEA Director General Dionisio Santiago and Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino, head of the agency's special enforcement services, said their allegation against the prosecutors was based on what they had been told by "informants," who they did not identify.

"We have no evidence, to in-

NO EVIDENCE A6

FILIAL MOMENT Jorge Joseph greets his father, Johnny "Midnight" Joseph, before the start of the hearing of the independent fact-finding panel. LYN RILLON

FAMILIAR FACES From left, PDEA lawyer Alvaro Lazaro, PDEA head Dionisio Santiago and Maj. Ferdinand Marcelino. Prosecutor John Resabia is behind, standing. LYN RILLON

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Enrile clarifies Cha-cha tune

SENATE PRESIDENT JUAN PONCE ENRILE CLARIfied yesterday that he was keeping an "open mind" about Charter change (Cha-cha) if it involves amendments to the economic provisions, and only if the initiative reaches the Senate.

Enrile said his comments last Wednesday on the approval by the House committee on constitutional amendments of House Resolution 737, which seeks to allow 100-percent foreign ownership of land, were taken out of context.

"What I said was that if talks on Cha-cha are elevated to the Senate, I am ready to keep an open mind about it only if, and I stress only if, the proposals to be considered will deal with the economic provisions of the present Constitution, nothing more," he said in a statement.

Enrile said he was "unanswering" to his opposition to any proposed initiative seeking to modify the structure of government.

He said he was also opposed to the manner of voting in the amendments as proposed by House members who want it approved like any ordinary bill going through the legislative process.

Compromise

"Changing our form of government and, more importantly, the manner of voting on the amendments, that is not something I am willing to compromise," he said.

HR 737, which seeks to enable foreigners to acquire and own land in the Philippines, is a strategic policy aimed at encouraging more long-term foreign investment in the country, according to its sponsor, Speaker Prospero Nograles.

Enrile said senators were conscious of the fear of some sectors of the public that the proposed to amend the economic provisions could be a ploy to introduce other "unforeseen amendments."

He said he "remained committed" to the Senate stand that "the intent of the Constitution that any proposed constitutional amendment requires the approval of both Houses of Congress voting separately."

An ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo said the House was moving in time in pursuing the initiative because it would "be a natural death" in the Senate.

"The moment it reaches the Senate it will die a natural death because there are many 'presidentiables' there," said Prospero Pichay, chair of the Local Government Administration and former Surigao del Sur congressman.

Pantaleon Rep. Rolle Golez, who voted against HR 737, believes there is not enough time to amend the Charter considering that national elections would take place next year.

He said the bill would face very tough sailing in the Senate where senators have already spoken out against amending the Constitution before 2010.

But even before the Senate, he said the bill would have to face the opposition in the House where even some members of the ruling coalition have different ideas about how to proceed with Charter change.

Nograles meanwhile said President Macapagal-Arroyo has never ordered him to launch Charter change.

He denied speculation that his position was under threat because of the President's supposed dissatisfaction with the slow progress of Cha-cha in the House and his decision to introduce only piecemeal changes to the Charter, like related story on Page A4?

House members belonging to the President's party, Lakas-Kampi-Kabalikang Pilipino Ilangid, have openly declared that they want to have the needed amendments passed before the end of Ms Arroyo's term in 2010.

Have no fear

Nograles said critics of the President need not fear that term limits would be lifted because with HR 737 only amendments "germane" or to some purpose will be passed.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita yesterday said the administration was not "totally

Gov't may lift OFW ban in Iraq

THE PHILIPPINES IS TO SEND A delegation to Iraq next week to evaluate whether it lift a ban on Filipinos working there, a labor department official said yesterday.

The mission will include members of the labor and foreign affairs departments, said Jennifer Manalili, administrator of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA).

President Macapagal-Arroyo banned the deployment of Filipinos workers to Iraq in 2004 after a Filipino truck driver was kidnapped and threatened with beheading.

The driver was later released unharmed after Ms. Arroyo withdrew the country's small contingent of troops and police.

Despite the ban an estimated 15,000 Filipinos work in Iraq.

An official Iraqi delegation was in Manila recently and called on the government to lift its ban, saying the country needed foreign workers to help it rebuild. AFP

Meralco cuts rate

CUSTOMERS OF MANILA ELECTRIC CO. will see their February electricity bills go down by five centavos per kilowatt hour, as it the generation charge falling to P4.68 per kWh.

This means that households consuming 200 kWh of electricity a month can expect their February bill to go down by P1, while those consuming 200 kWh will see a P10 reduction in their bills.

Jesusa de la Peña, Meralco vice president and head of utility economics, explained that the announced low prices in the wholesale electricity spot market (WESM) was mainly responsible for the reduction.

Last month, the price of power that Meralco purchased from WESM was P2.16 a kWh, net of certain adjustments, De la Peña said.

Another factor was the reduced peak-hour purchases by the utility from state generator National Power Corp.

Beyond control

According to De la Peña, Meralco last month purchased 18 percent of its requirements from the WESM, 26 percent from bilateral contracts and 56 percent from independent power producers (IPPs).

She said future movements in the generation charge would depend on a number of factors, including the rate of fuel used in power generation, the peso-dollar exchange rate, and supply and demand conditions—all of which impact on the prices of the WESM and the IPPs.

"These factors, all of which are beyond the control of Meralco, will be closely monitored and their potential impact on electricity prices assessed," De la Peña said.

Meralco has claimed that it does not earn a single centavo from the two adjustments of the power producers from which it sources its power. —Amy R. Remo

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Free lawyers for aliens in trouble

PUBLIC ATTORNEYS WILL NOW PROVIDE free legal assistance to foreigners facing deportation and to Filipinos who have complaints against foreigners, according to a memorandum of agreement forged yesterday between the Bureau of Immigration and the Public Attorney's Office.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez hailed the deployment of public attorneys at the bureau, saying it would place the country in an even better light in the eyes of foreigners.

Gonzalez, according to a BI press statement, said the assignment of public attorneys at the bureau's main office in Intramuros, Manila, will improve the services of the bureau and redound to the increased attractiveness of the Philippines to foreign investors and tourists.

Gonzalez led yesterday's launching of the Public Attorney's Desk and the Public Assistance and Information Center at the immigration bureau's main office in Intramuros.

At the same time, the bureau also launched its Public Information and Assistance Unit (Piau) also at the bureau's main lobby to provide assistance and receive complaints from the transacting public.

"The need for justice is universal and we shall extend it not only to our countrymen but also to the foreigners who visit our country. This is an important aspect of international law," Gonzalez said in his speech at the launching.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan and Public Attorney's Office (Pao) head Persida Acosta signed a memorandum of agreement to provide legal assistance to aliens facing deportation and Filipinos who might have complaints against foreigners.

NO OUSTER PLOT

Nograles safe, says Palace

By TJ Burgonio

MALACAÑANG YESTERDAY LAUGHED off reports it was plotting the ouster of Speaker Prospero Nograles over his ballyhooed effort to stop administration moves to impeach Chief Justice Puno.

"I can tell you right off (there's no such effort on the part of Malacañang," Executive Secretary Ed. Ermita told reporters in a briefing.

Ermita said President Macapagal-Arroyo considered Nograles a very close ally, and was also one to her aides convinced him to take the presidency of the ruling Lakas-CMD party last year.

"The relationship of the Speaker and the President is that close. So there's no truth to that report that there's an effort to oust him. And there's no reason for him to be ousted," Ermita said.

Cibac party-list Rep. Joel Villanueva had claimed there was a "serious move" by Malacañang to replace Nograles with someone who would harpoon Charter change through Congress.

While Nograles authored a House resolution seeking to amend economic provisions in the Constitution—which passed in committee—he has been accused by members of the President's party, the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), of being half-hearted in spearheading up the Charter change (Cha cha) before 2010.

In a related development, Ermita said it was to be expected that Charter change would come up in the merger talks between Lakas and Kampi.

"It's inevitable this thing will be discussed in the meeting of the committee headed by Gabriel Claudio. It's not surprising this issue might come up," he said, pointing out that Kampi president Cristina Ines Bui Boy, Lito Villaborne was for Charter change.

The two parties met Wednesday night to begin merger negotiations ahead of the 2010 elections.

But Claudio stressed that Charter was not on the agenda of the talks.

"There was never any discussion whatsoever on Cha-cha. It's not on the agenda and definitely not the purpose of the NCUC (national consultation and unification committee) [of the two parties]," he said in a text message.

Lakas, Kampi set aside egos in merger meet

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE TWO BIGGEST POLITICAL parties in the country have begun formal unification talks, initially agreeing to a merger "in principle" and to refrain from looking for a presidential candidate until the process is completed.

For this alone, former Rep. Prospero Pichay, spokesperson of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, said the three-hour meeting at Bahia Shangri-La hotel in Mandaluyong City Wednesday night was a "success."

"We have touched the first major roadblock," he said the business yesterday. "We agreed in principle that we're going to work on a document, consensus and solid merger."

Pichay said "egos were set aside the moment they decided to sit with us at the table."

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Classe

US Senate stimulus plan to help Filipino war vets

From page A1

Philippines from the 1941 Japanese invasion and resist subsequent Japanese occupation.

The Philippines was a US colony at the time, and the US military assured Filipinos they could apply for US citizenship and qualify for full US veterans' benefits if they served.

After the war, however, the US Congress passed the Rescission Act of 1946, stripping Filipino veterans of their status as US veterans. This denied Filipinos the benefits they were promised.

The veterans have campaigned for decades to win those benefits back. They've had some victories, including when Congress passed a bill allowing thousands to immigrate and become US citizens. But all efforts to amend contentious cases a decade later.

Solemn promise revoked

According to Inouye, about 18,000 veterans are still alive in the Philippines and the United States. Many live in Hawaii and California.

The stimulus bill would award a one-time payment of $15,000 to veterans who are now American citizens and $9,000 to noncitizens.

Inouye, who fought with the US Army in Italy during World War II, said the measure would "close a dark chapter in the history of this country.

"This nation made a solemn promise, and with hardly a hesitation, we revoked it," Inouye said in a statement. "This episode is a blight upon the character of the United States, and it must be cleansed."

Touting the campaign, President Barack Obama voiced support for awarding benefits to the veterans.

OK on Friday seen

Democratic leaders hope for Senate passage of the legislation by Friday at the latest, although prospects appear to hinge on crafting a series of spending reductions that would make the bill more palatable to centrists in both parties.

Three ranking senators met with Obama at the White House on Wednesday to discuss possible cutbacks, but they declined to discuss details of their talks. Obama has made the legislation a cornerstone of his economic plan.

For their part, Senate Republicans signaled they would persist in their efforts to reduce spending in the measure, add tax cuts and reduce the cost of mortgages for millions of homeowners.

Historically large to begin with, the economic stimulus bill is growing larger by the day in the Senate, where the addition of a new tax break for home buyers has sent the price tag well past $900 billion.

"It is time to fix housing first," Republican Sen. Johnny Isakson said on Wednesday night as the Senate agreed without controversy to add the new tax break to the stimulus measure at an estimated cost of nearly $19 billion.

The tax break was the most notable attempt to date to add help for the crippled housing industry and gave Republicans a victory as they work to remake the legislation more to their liking.

$920-B price tag

Official figures were unavailable, but it appeared that the measure carried a price tag of more than $900 billion, making it bigger than the financial industry bailout that passed last year and as large as any measure in memory.

Despite bipartisan concern to advance the vote, Republicans failed in a series of attempts on Wednesday to cut back the bill's size.

The most sweeping proposal, advanced by Sen. Jim DeMint, would have eliminated all the spending and replaced it with a series of tax cuts. The proposal was defeated 61-36.

Democrats also upheld a so-called "Buy American" provision that would require projects financed by the measure to be built with domestically produced iron and steel.

$1,800 tax cut

But with Obama voicing concern about the provision, the requirement was changed to specify that US international trade agreements are not to be violated.

Additionally, Democrats inched back an attempt to strip out a provision that Obama had said was essential. It would provide a tax cut of up to $1,000 for working couples, including those who do not make enough to pay income taxes.

Isakson said the new tax break for home buyers was intended to help revive the housing industry, which has virtually collapsed in the wake of a credit crisis that exploded last fall.

The proposal would allow a tax credit of 10 percent of the value of new or existing residences, up to a $15,000 limit. Current law provides for a $7,500 tax break but only for first-time home buyers.

Isakson's office said the proposal would cost the government an estimated $19 billion.

The provision was the second tax cut approved in as many days targeted to individual industries. On Tuesday, the Senate voted to give a break to consumers who buy new cars.

The House approved its own version of the bill last week. AP

THE OBAMAS AT THE WHITE HOUSE US President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle greet guests at a signing ceremony of the $32.8-expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program. AFP PHOTO

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First 10 cu.m.	P 77.62 /comm.	P 87.09 /comm.
Next 10 cu.m.	9.46 /cu.m.	10.64 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	18.02 /cu.m.	20.22 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	23.67 /cu.m.	26.56 /cu.m.
Next 30 cu.m.	27.68 /cu.m.	31.02 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	28.96 /cu.m.	32.43 /cu.m.
Next 50 cu.m.	30.23 /cu.m.	33.82 /cu.m.
Next 50 cu.m.	31.58 /cu.m.	35.43 /cu.m.
Over 200 cu.m.	32.91 /cu.m.	36.93 /cu.m.
BUSINESS GROUP I		
First 10 cu.m.	P 352.76 /comm.	P 395.80 /comm.
Next 90 cu.m.	35.44 /cu.m.	39.76 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	35.54 /cu.m.	39.88 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	35.64 /cu.m.	39.99 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	35.77 /cu.m.	40.13 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	35.88 /cu.m.	40.26 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	36.06 /cu.m.	40.46 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	36.21 /cu.m.	40.63 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	36.32 /cu.m.	40.75 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	36.45 /cu.m.	40.90 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	36.55 /cu.m.	41.01 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	36.73 /cu.m.	41.21 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	36.84 /cu.m.	41.33 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	37.01 /cu.m.	41.53 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	37.12 /cu.m.	41.65 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	37.22 /cu.m.	41.76 /cu.m.
Next 300 cu.m.	37.33 /cu.m.	41.88 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	37.53 /cu.m.	42.11 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	37.68 /cu.m.	42.24 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	37.79 /cu.m.	42.40 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	37.88 /cu.m.	42.47 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	38.01 /cu.m.	42.65 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	38.18 /cu.m.	42.84 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	38.27 /cu.m.	42.94 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	38.41 /cu.m.	43.10 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	38.56 /cu.m.	43.26 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	38.66 /cu.m.	43.38 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	38.81 /cu.m.	43.54 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	38.96 /cu.m.	43.70 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	39.08 /cu.m.	43.85 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	39.22 /cu.m.	44.00 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	39.34 /cu.m.	44.14 /cu.m.
Over 10000 cu.m.	39.48 /cu.m.	44.30 /cu.m.
SEMI-BUSINESS		
First 10 cu.m.	P 130.38 /comm.	P 146.29 /comm.
Next 10 cu.m.	15.91 /cu.m.	17.85 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	19.61 /cu.m.	22.00 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	24.66 /cu.m.	27.66 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	28.90 /cu.m.	32.43 /cu.m.
Next 20 cu.m.	30.26 /cu.m.	33.95 /cu.m.
Next 50 cu.m.	31.58 /cu.m.	35.43 /cu.m.
Next 50 cu.m.	32.91 /cu.m.	36.93 /cu.m.
Over 200 cu.m.	34.22 /cu.m.	38.39 /cu.m.
BUSINESS GROUP II		
First 10 cu.m.	P 381.71 /comm.	P 428.25 /comm.
Next 90 cu.m.	38.41 /cu.m.	43.10 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	38.68 /cu.m.	43.38 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	38.96 /cu.m.	43.70 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	39.22 /cu.m.	44.00 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	39.48 /cu.m.	44.30 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	39.75 /cu.m.	44.60 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	40.01 /cu.m.	44.89 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	40.28 /cu.m.	45.16 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	40.54 /cu.m.	45.49 /cu.m.
Next 100 cu.m.	40.78 /cu.m.	45.76 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	41.08 /cu.m.	46.08 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	41.36 /cu.m.	46.34 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	41.60 /cu.m.	46.68 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	41.82 /cu.m.	46.92 /cu.m.
Next 200 cu.m.	42.11 /cu.m.	47.25 /cu.m.
Next 300 cu.m.	42.37 /cu.m.	47.54 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	42.61 /cu.m.	47.81 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	42.97 /cu.m.	48.10 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	43.17 /cu.m.	48.44 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	43.46 /cu.m.	48.69 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	43.70 /cu.m.	49.03 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	43.94 /cu.m.	49.30 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	44.18 /cu.m.	49.57 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	44.47 /cu.m.	49.89 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	44.75 /cu.m.	50.21 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	44.98 /cu.m.	50.47 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	45.26 /cu.m.	50.83 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	45.51 /cu.m.	51.08 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	45.81 /cu.m.	51.40 /cu.m.
Next 500 cu.m.	46.06 /cu.m.	51.67 /cu.m.
Next 800 cu.m.	46.33 /cu.m.	51.98 /cu.m.
Over 10000 cu.m.	46.57 /cu.m.	52.25 /cu.m.

B. CERA – P1.03/cu.m. of water consumption

C. Foreign Currency Differential Adjustmet (FCDA) – Percentage of the Basic Charge subject to periodic review and adjustment

2. A. ENVIRONMENTAL CHARGE (EC) – 10% of Water Charge
Applicable to all customers

B. SEWERAGE CHARGE (SC) – 50% OF Water Charge
To be charged to all customers connected to Maynilad sewerlines

3. MAINTENANCE SERVICE CHARGE (MSC)

METER SIZE	AMOUNT (per conn.)	METER SIZE	AMOUNT (per conn.)	METER SIZE	AMOUNT (per conn.)
1/2" or 13mm	P 1.50	1 1/4" or 40mm	4.00	4" or 50mm	20.00
3/4" or 20mm	2.50	2" or 50mm	6.00	6" or 150mm	35.00
1" or 25mm	3.00	3" or 75mm	10.00	8" or 200mm	50.00

4. VALUE-ADDED TAX (VAT) 12% OF THE Charges 1, 2 and 3

THE MONTHLY BILL IS THE SUM OF 1, 2, 3 and 4

Approved by:

MANUEL P. QUIZON
MWSS-Regulatory Board

DIOSDADO JOSE M. ALLADO
Administrator, MWSS

ROGELIO L. SINGSON
President, Maynilad

Comelec's new exec: So near yet so far

By Kristine L. Alave

FOR MARIANO CITE promotion Elias Yusoph, his seat in the Commission on Elections is so near yet so far.

Comelec Chair Jose Melo said yesterday Yusoph, who was appointed in the poll agency last month by Malacañang, would not be able to take his seat as the sixth and newest commissioners because he was not able to take his oath of office before his ad interim appointment lapsed.

"We cannot ask Mr. cannot participate. He is not a commissioner yet because he has not taken his oath," Melo said.

Melo, a former Supreme Court justice, said there were two steps to an appointment. First, there must be appointment papers and, second, the appointee must take an oath of office, he said.

Ad interim

Yusoph, who will be joining the Comelec in the midst of its preparations for the 2010 elections, was appointed by President Macapagal-Arroyo on Jan. 12 while Congress was on a break.

Officials appointed ad interim, or while Congress is in recess, must take their oath of office and execute their duties without having to secure the approval of the bicameral Commission on Appointments (CA).

Yusoph's appointment on Jan. 12 would have allowed him to bypass the CA as Congress resumed its sessions on Jan. 19.

But since he was not able to take his oath before Jan. 19 when Congress resumed, he now has to wait for CA confirmation or for President Arroyo to reappoint him during the next Congress break in April, Melo said.

Although Yusoph's appointment papers were dated Jan. 12, they were transmitted to the Comelec and announced to the public only on Feb. 3, when Congress was back in session.

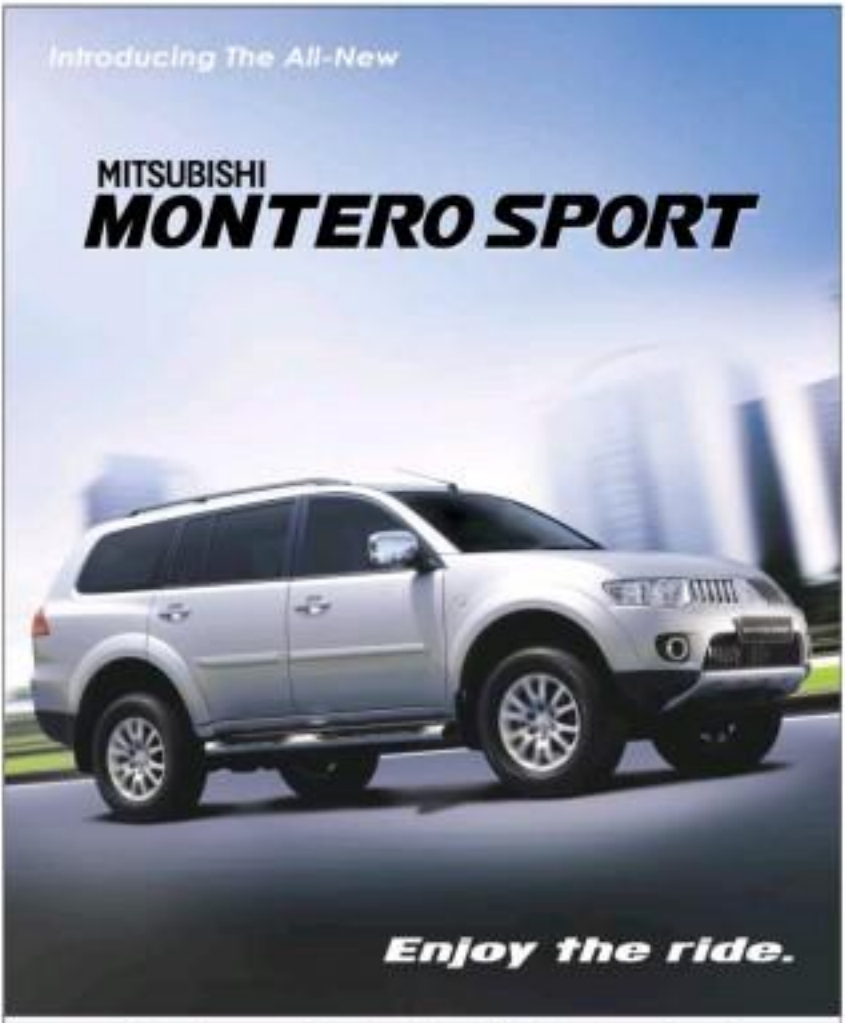
Disappointed

"He is in an interim appointment, which lapsed because he did not take the oath when Congress was in session," Melo explained.

Melo said he informed Yusoph of his status when the latter paid a courtesy call on him Tuesday afternoon.

"He was disappointed," Melo said, but added that Yusoph understood the situation because he was a lawyer.

He has requested Yusoph to furnish Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano, the alleged mastermind of the alleged cheating that favored Ms Arroyo in the 2004 presidential election, Melo said they were "all speculation."



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Drive to earth

House probers vent ire on fact-finding panel

By Leila B. Salaverria

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF Representatives yesterday ventured their ire on the independent fact-finding panel looking into the alleged bribery that arose from the arrest of the Alabang Boys.

This was because the panel assumes a primary role in skip the hearings of the House committee on dangerous drugs and instead investigate the independent body's own hearing.

Majority Floorleader John Reyno do and top officials of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) were among those who were absent at the House hearing. The Reynaldo was his nephew, Ambassador Teresita Ang-See, to the House hearing, while PDEA Director General Dionisio Santiago came after lunch.

It was Reynaldo who came up with the resolution dropping the charges against drug suspects Richard Brodett, Jorge Joseph and Joseph Tresure, collectively known as the Alabang Boys.

Santiago, a former military chief, said he raised the bribery allegation because "the case against the suspects was dismissed on technicality, so this makes us wonder why."

Biazon, a senior major who headed the PDEA's arrest of Joseph, Brodett and Tresure on Sept. 25, 2008, also admitted he had no direct knowledge of the Department of Justice (DOJ) resolution.

He told the panel that he was then often offered a bribe to release the suspects after the PDEA filed the charges in the justice department.

Asked why he did not cry to

From page A1

formation to confirm they (prosecutors) received the bribe. We don't have direct knowledge," Santiago told ex-Supreme Court Associate Justice Candido Cabo-Aquino, ex-Sandiganbayan Associate Justice Raoul Victorino and Jun Bocla law dean Fr. Rodolfo Aquino.

So ruthless

Said Hontiveles, the PDEA claimed that it received information that P50 million "changed hands" that resulted in state prosecutors dropping the charges against Richard Brodett, Jorge Joseph and Joseph Tresure, collectively

From page A1

carrying the one who offered him a bribe, Biazon-Diaz said he did not feel that it was part of his duty to do so since he had turned down the offer.

Not a priority

"My mandate is (to fight) drugs only. If I will go after the bribe giver, that's the least of my priority," Maceralbo said, while claiming he would not forgive his own security members if he learned that they received any bribe.

He said his information about an alleged P50-million bribe came from an "active source" who was close to one of the suspects.

The DOJ dismissed the charges against the Alabang Boys last Dec. 2 due to questions on the manner of arrest. The suspects, however, remain in PDEA custody while Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez reviews the DOJ resolution that dismissed the charges.

Justice officials have subsequently denied having received any bribe.

Journalists subpoenaed

The hair-dividing panel yesterday subpoenaed four journalists after Maceralbo cited news reports as the basis for his conclusion that Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Blancaflor tried to intervene on behalf of the suspects.

The panel subpoenaed Philippine Star columnist Antonio Nonillo and ABS-CBN anchor Nicky Carandang, who reported about Blancaflor's bank transactions last Dec. 19.

This was the day Blancaflor called up Maceralbo to ask why the three suspects have not been released despite the dismissal of the charges.

The panel also subpoenaed Philippine Star reporters Rita Linda and Mike Frialde who broke the story about the alleged bribery.

Procedural lapses

The independent panel, formed by President Macapagal-Arroyo to look into the bribery scandal, also questioned the PDEA for alleged procedural lapses in the buy-bust operation against the Alabang Boys.

The violations at first said his team "tested-up" followed the police operations manual in the buy-bust.

But later he admitted that the team was no longer using affirmative door number on marked money for arresting drug pushers.

Hontiveles, citing the experience of operatives, said drug pushers were quick to notice the door number, prompting the operatives, the said his group merely photocopied the marked money.

No evidence of bribery, PDEA executives tell probers

From page A1

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Traders ask solon to probe DOJ 'flip-flop' on estafa case

From page A1

Antonio Ty, one of the complainants, said in an interview yesterday that Gonzalez's "flip-flopping" on the case prompted the group to seek help from lawmakers.

In a letter to Romualdez, chair of the House committee on good government and public accountability, the complainants said Gonzalez's reversal of his decision on the case showed "gross and shocking anomalies" in the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Aside from Ty, the Feb. 4 letter was signed by businessmen Roberto Cervantes, Norma Wong, Maria Pineda, Cristina Cantoral, Sonia Bocaco and Wilfredo Cabrera.

"The anomalous conduct of a veritable 'tug of war' with respect to the decision of [Gonzalez] as to whether or not a case for undocumented emails should be filed against [Estrada]," the letter said.

"The flip-flopping of Gonzalez ... was made even more suspicious in the face of persistent rumors ... that a relative of the members of the movant, who are also from Iloilo like Secretary Gonzalez, was actively talking to top DOJ officials for the downgrading of the cumbersome offense of syndicated estafa to simple estafa," it added.

Justice Undersecretary Fidel Ernesto told the lawyers that Gonzalez was well within his authority to reverse, affirm or modify any resolution he himself had made. "That's the power of control," he said.

The group of businessmen also went to Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tañada to hand him a copy of the letter.

Tañada, a member of Romualdez's committee, vowed to initiate an investigation of the supposed

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bribery, according to Bedimael Tejada, the group's lawyer.

Senate probe sought

The businessmen said they would also meet with Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. to request for a parallel investigation in the chamber.

"There are many good contractual workers at the DOJ that because of the size of the Alabang Boys' net that one, the cause of the DOJ has been tainted," Tejada said.

"It's also important for our lawmakers to understand that there's a need to review and expand the coverage of the law on syndicated estafa."

Documents showed that Undersecretary Jose Didoy Barreras approved the filing of a case for syndicated estafa against Reiza and her cousin on Jan. 30, 2008. With a report from Doris J. Bongbong

Military poised to move on kidnappers of Red Cross workers

From page A1

Also yesterday, Iloilo Gov. Melquiades Tuico met with Maj. Gen. Jaime Delfin, the chief of Task Force Comet, and other local officials, according to the information who asked not to be named for lack of authority to speak on the matter.

A number of personnel of the 12th Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines attended the brief, closed-door meeting that started at 8 a.m., the informant said.

After the meeting, Tuico and some US soldiers left.

Afterwards, no new troops reinforcements, Tuico's Barangay Lanipao near the area of Barangay Tabby Dorolla," the informant said, adding:

"Yeah, a movement of troops cannot happen if there's no approval from the governor."

Waiting for an order

According to a government worker in Indanan who spoke on condition of anonymity, the soldiers were "already waiting for an order to hold a military operation in Talipi Dorolla."

The barangay sits between the towns of Indanan and Talipao and straddles three municipalities—Bud Tumantangal, Bud Kapoti and Bitsan Tutan. It is some 22 kilometers away from the Jolo town proper.

The informant said government troops had positioned themselves in Lanipa, which is adjacent to Talipi Dorolla.

Social worker Christopher Lee said Talipi Dorolla had long been abandoned by its residents.

"Residents have followed the army," Lee said. "They evacuated because they were afraid to be caught in the crossfire every time there was a military operation. "

Para Lt. Emeliano Cardoz, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, refused to comment on the military movement.

Another would Senior Supt. Sebastian Kastro, the police chief of Sulu.

All Kastro would say was: "We are very, very busy today complying with the particular tids given to us by the Task Force Comet pertaining to the ICRC case."

He also said police forces were being mobilized to secure all the major highways in Sulu and to fortify their forces in established choke points.

Mayors' commitment

The Inayoan reportedly tried to reach Governor Tan on his mobile phone, to no avail.

Mayor Hussin Amin of Jolo, Sulu, who was present in the meeting, said the governor merely talked about solid waste management and peace and security matters.

Amin refused to comment on the military movements, but confirmed that his had instructed the police to be vigilant about the movements of suspected Abu Sayyaf members in the area.

"We have stepped here consulted to provide our resources, such as money, effort and even our men. We are also willing to back the military in order to maintain peace and security while the troops are in the area," he said.

Fallout 'impossible'

The three ICRC aid workers were abducted by Abu Sayyaf bandits on Jan. 15 while they were in a van heading to the Jolo airport.

The military was relieved to have their voices in no interviews pursuing agreement with radio stations dxRC.

But Armed Forces spokesperson Lt. Col. Ernesto Torres said the military would not give in to the demand of Abu Sayyaf commander Albader Parad to pull government troops out of Sulu.

Torres, along with reporters in Camp Aguinaldo, listened to the 14-minute dxRC interview with Parad and the captives.

Parad said his group would not negotiate with anyone for the captives' release if the military continued its operations on the island.

Unmoved, Torres: "I don't know what he means by that... The may suspend another operations, but we can never pull out our troops from the island in the middle of a crisis. It's impossible."

He said the suspension of military operations, such as the regular and intensive security patrols in certain areas in Sulu, might be implemented to give way to negotiations, per the recommendation of the multiagency body handling the rescue of the three ICRC aid workers.

But up to now, the Task Force ICRC has yet to advise the military of a temporary suspension of its operations in the area.

Torres also said the military could not forge intelligence and information gathering in order to rescue the captives.

'Doing fine'

Lanaba, Sapul and Torres had just visited the Sulu provincial jail to inspect a secure and sanitation project for the inmates there when they were seized in ambush.

But they assured the public in the interviews that they were "doing fine."

"We are treated like guests [by our kidnappers]. We can what they eat and if we need something, they get out and get it for us," said Sapul, 63.

Said Torres: "We share the relief of their families and the ICRC that they are alive. Judging from the way they talk, they seem to be really OK."

But Sapul appealed to the government to deal with the kidnappers and "find a way to pull us out."

Torres, 38, also appealed to authorities to "choose to negotiate" with their kidnappers and "take the offer seriously."

Lanaba, 37, said it was constantly raining in the area where they were being held.

"I hope the government can help us and give the kidnappers what they want so we can go back to our work," Lanaba said.

He said the van he regular contract each her family.

"I love them. Tell them to pray for me, for the three of us. I wish we could go home soon. To the ICRC, thank you very much. Help us," she said.

'Why me?'

In Bindaraning, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said Vice President Noli de Castro should get a clearance from authorities if he wished to negotiate the release of the ICRC aid workers.

"I agree. Why not, if it's for the good and safety of the workers?" Ermita said when asked about reports that De Castro had agreed to seek the release of the captives.

But he added: "He should first get the advice and the recommendation of the people on the ground—the police, military, and especially the members of the local crisis committees, headed by Gov. Sakur Tan."

De Castro had said he would confer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Italy on a possible mission to secure the release of the captives.

Manila, however, said he had yet to confirm from De Castro himself if the latter would indeed get directly involved in the negotiations.

He also noted that the same an "all-out" military solution to the kidnappings perpetrated by the Abu Sayyaf.

'We don't negotiate'

Bindaraning, as a matter of policy, had a resolute stance. Parad's demand that De Castro lead the negotiations for the release of the captives.

It said the local crisis committees headed by Tan should be left alone to handle the negotiations.

In a brief call to the Inquirer yesterday morning, Sen. Richard Gordon said the government should let the crisis committee handle the matter.

"We don't negotiate with the kidnappers," said Gordon, the chair of the Philippine National Red Cross. "We have to be very patient."

Not involved

Gilbert Andamasabi to the Philippines Ambassador Anna Feruccio discussed a demand by the Abu Sayyaf to include him in one of the negotiators for the release of the ICRC trio.

In an interview, Bolde said he had neither seen the supposed letter of the Abu Sayyaf nor received an invitation from the Philippine government in this effect.

He said the negotiation for the release of Lanaba, Sapul and Hartzer was being handled very well by the Philippine government. With reports from TJ Burgonio and Cynthia D. Balana in Manila

Loren also key to my release in 2002

By Arlyn dela Cruz
Correspondent

"The entire approach on the Abu Sayyaf that Vice President Noli de Castro negotiate with them for the release of the three kidnapped Department of Comelec[sic] of the Red Cross members. The minister Ano[sic] inspired Legarda had stated the thunder from De Castro is the bid to seek Dela Cruz's (President.)

BOTH VICE PRESIDENT NOLI de Castro and Sen. Loren Legarda were instrumental in negotiating my release in 2002, ending 99 days of captivity in the hands of the communist rebels and insurgents of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

As a hostage, I was not privy to the details of how the two got into the picture, only thankful that both did in their own perfect time, that eventually led to my freedom.

All I know then was that it was my godmother Cherry Casandalan who was in constant touch with my abductors and also was the one who tapped the right people to help us, Dr. Castro and Legarda included.

It was Dr. Castro who called the shots in the media, telling everyone to be wise to grave danger and I needed help.

It was Legarda, however, according to Columbidan, who acted at once during the crucial hour when the circumstances set for my release by my abductors led by Datu Abdulbaki was at hand.

Columbidan said Legarda who was home from Manila to Sulu, I would not have been freed, according to Columbidan.

It was Noli's call for help, however, that got things rolling, kicking off an informal negotiation for proof of my life.

But it was Loren's initial 1 connective holding sure so tightly that day of my freedom.

It's been almost seven years since that hot flying ordeal in the jungles of Sulu, that turned into my ultimate journey of faith.

I'm still in touch with Loren and indebted to my two colleagues in media who now occupy high positions in government.

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Metro folk to pay more

From page B-1

Manila Water Services Inc. announced plans last December to increase charges by P18.96 per cubic meter, while Manila Water Co. sought approval to increase its tariff by P6.96 per cubic meter.

To cover inflation and forex losses, Ayala-led Manila Water will add an average of P2.27 per cubic meter to the monthly bills of its customers in the east zone, while Metrolink will add an average of P2.61 per cubic meter to the monthly bills of its customers in the west zone.

These rate increases reflect a 12.3-percent adjustment for inflation and 3.03 percent in foreign currency adjustment.

Before the adjustments, the rates are P24 per cubic meter for Manila Water and P34 for Maynilad.

Explain increase

Makasantang yesterday asked the MWSS to submit a position paper on the rate adjustments.

"We want to see the rationale or position of the agency in managing our water on why they think there should be an increase," Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said.

He said there was an outstanding instruction from President Macapagal-Arroyo for the MWSS not to increase water rates.

"If there's such a need for it, the MWSS should submit a position paper, which will be used as 'basis for guidance'" from Mr. Arroyo, Ermita said.

He said the government should consider the economic situation. "Can you imagine all the talk of and citizens losing jobs because of the economic problems? There are companies shutting down, and then we're going to add burden to our citizenry," he said.

Exempt

The water concessionaires and the MWSS said the adjustments would not affect those consuming 10 cubic meters a month and below.

"Only consumers using up more than 10 cubic meters of water every month will be affected by the adjustments," said Jerry Sevilla, Manila Water corporate communications chief.

MWSS Administrator Diosdado Allado confirmed that households using less than 10 cubic meters a month were exempt from the adjustments.

Low-income households make up 1.3 million or about 25 percent of Manila Water's 5.6 million customers in the east zone.

The east zone comprises the cities of Makati, Pasig, Mandaluyong, Marikina, most parts of Quezon City, some parts of Manila, San Juan, Taguig and the municipality of Pateros. It also covers cities and municipalities in Rizal province.

For Maynilad, low-income households make up about 28 percent or 1.4 million of its 6.2 million customers in the west zone.

The west zone comprises 11 cities (Pasay, Caloocan, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Valenzuela, Muntinlupa, Manila except portions of San Andres and Sta. Ana, some parts of Makati and Quezon City, Malabon and Navotas—all in Metro Manila), and Cavite City and the towns of Bacoor, Imus, Noveleta, Rosario and Kawit in Cavite province.

Bulk of customers

Consumers who use up to 30 cubic meters a month and make up the bulk of the east zone's customers' customers will still be paying below the average adjustment.

Consumers in the east zone will pay an extra P49 monthly, while customers in the west zone will shell out an additional P58 a month, slightly below P2 per cubic meter.

As for the basic rates, Allado said the MWSS board scrapped from its Feb. 5 resolution that there should be no increases for the year.

He said the MWSS only allowed the implementation of the inflation and foreign currency differential adjustments because these were correct provisions.

"By the end of the year we will again review the rate rebasing scheme as if there will be changes it would not take effect within the year," he said.

The MWSS reviews the spending programs of Manila Water and Maynilad and the (unused) tariff adjustments for implementation every five years.

The latest rebasing was supposed to have been implemented on Jan. 1 this year but was delivered on February and later it was for the whole year.

THE LINK presents an opportunity for this boy to breathe up.

Last FedEx plane out of Subic today, 800 lose jobs

From page B-1

Arroyo said the firm would take a few months to pull out. "It may take three until May to completely move their operations to China," he said.

Pioneer locator

Subic has been the hub of FedEx Asia-Pacific operations since 1995, making it one of the pioneer investors here. After the closure of the US Naval Base in 1992, Subic became one of the biggest investors in the port.

FedEx, according to its company profile, provides services to more than 1.9 million locations in 212 countries daily. It employs about 137,000 people, has nearly 43,500 drop-off locations, and operates more than 500 planes and 38,500 vehicles in its integrated global network.

At least 800 Filipino workers will lose their jobs when the company pulls out, the SBMA said.

Takes care of employees

"They are one of the best companies here. They have already taken care of their employees, especially those who will lose their jobs. They're given out separation pay and benefits," Arroyo said.

But he said he was hopeful that FedEx would return to Subic.

"It's still possible for them to come back ... They are still testing the facilities in Guangzhou. If something goes wrong, or if they find that the capacity of their facility there is inadequate, then they can still use Subic as a base of operations," Arroyo said.

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Probe of Mike A pushed

From page A1

"She should act to clean up the graft gangs in his government," Perez said in a statement. "She must spearhead this war against corruption by starting to bar cases bankyard. Only then can she prove her sincerity."

In a text message sent later to reporters, Koga noted his attorney's unwholesale trips to the United States and wondered whether it had to do with the current scandal.

Criminal proceedings

Lacson separately told radio stations dzMM and dzIQ—that by running the inquiry, Santiago could issue a subpoena to the Office of the Ombudsman to compel it to release the World Bank report.

He pointed out that the World Bank had sent the Ombudsman in March the Department of Finance a copy of its findings that three Filipino contractors colluded in converting projects that the World Bank funded under the National Roads and Improvement and Management Program (NRMP I).

"That's why the Ombudsman should start criminal proceedings," Lacson said.

Santiago told reporters on Wednesday that she had a copy of the World Bank report and that it did not mention the allegations against Mike Arroyo.

Then she reminded Lacson to say that Santiago must have the "wrong copy."

He said yesterday that Santiago was apparently holding, not the actual report of the World Bank, but merely a bad leaked to the Blackboard contractors.

Lacson said Santiago may or may not resume the inquiry. "But it is the Philippine government, the Filipino people, who will be put to an embarrassing position," he said.

Lacson revealed the position of the report's where a Japanese contractor linked Mike Arroyo and the late Sen. Robert Barbers to purported bribes.

"Isn't that embarrassing? A senator and the husband of a President linked to bribery?" he said.

Lacson said that if he was urged to get a complete copy of the World Bank report, he would deliver a privilege speech so that the Senate and the people would be informed of the many wrongs in the government procurement process.

And if Santiago, who chairs the committee on economic affairs, will not resume the inquiry, Sen. Francis Escudero is prepared to step in.

It is convenient, Escudero said, his committee is now considering amendments and revision of rules and laws would "dig deeper" into the issue to an effort to tighten safeguards in the government procurement system.

"To avoid the practice of what the World Bank has already called a major cartel, the discretion of procurement agencies should be lessened and observers should be invited to participate in the bidding process," he said.

Copy of complaints

In Mainstreaming, Press Secretary Cerge Remonde said the purported World Bank report implicating the President's husband in the rigging of public works contracts was but a copy of complaints prepared by losing contractors.

Remonde said he got this information at a meeting with World Bank officials.

"The theory is that what [Lacson is] peddling to the World Bank report is not really a report of the investigation but a copy of the allegations made by the losing contractors that was given to the respondents' consensus," he told reporters after attending.

Remonde likened the document to a subpoena issued by complainants to the Office of the Prosecutor, which requires a reply from respondents.

"We really need to look at this so-called World Bank report [to see] if it is [the real thing]," he said.

He expressed doubt that the World Bank would "leak its findings," and said "that's not the way [it] works."

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita was vague as suburbs Malacañang was holding a copy of the official World Bank report. But he said the Office of the Ombudsman was now looking into the allegations.

About two weeks ago when the report was first made public, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said World Bank officials had furnished the Ombudsman all documents concerning the rigged bids.

"If there is evidence to prove the involvement of those in government, especially from the executive branch, [the case] should be pursued," Ermita said.

Asked if the Palace would formally ask Malacañang from the World Bank, Ermita said it was leaving the matter to the Senate and budget department and the National Economic and Development Authority.

Put up or shut up

Hungarian-Malang, a former representative of Bataan and now board chair of the Local Water Utilities Administration, challenged Lacson to make public the purported evidence linking him, Mike Arroyo and former Bataan Governor Enrique "Henry" Perez to the corruption in World Bank-funded projects.

"My advice to Sen. Ping Lacson is: If you don't have evidence, keep your mouth shut because you will destroy the reputation of the Senate," Pichay told the reporters on the phone.

He added: "Senator Ping, look for other victims. Spare the Flor Gentleman, Jing Paras and myself from your dirty play ... I challenge the World Bank to name one official report on the matter so that I can file necessary charges against irresponsible people."

Pichay pointed out that two-time President Joan Poser Estrella and Santiago had said that the evidence being handled about by Lacson was "pure hearsay."

"In their copy of the report, the names are not there. Estrella's evidence is not good. In that one way of serving the people, by connecting lies and rumors and hearsay?" he said.

Pichay said that "for the record," there was "no foreign funded project, both foreign and local," with R.C. de Leon Construction Corp., one of the three blacklisted contractors.

"Second, no foreign-funded project was ever implemented in my district," he said.

3 terms, 3 bids

Pichay said a project for the concreting of roads worth P1.2 billion was first bid out during his first term as congressman in 1996. It was part of the NRMP I financed by the World Bank.

"In my three terms, three times they also bid it out. In fact, I have cited I have influenced these foreign contractors? How can I influence the Bids and Awards Committee when I'm not a member?" he said.

According to Pichay, the World Bank should have investigated Chinese contractors assisted by the other Chinese contractors to bad blacklisted.

But he could not name these contractors, saying he did not know them.

"All of them are also guilty of collusion. I think the World Bank should also be investigated why that happened," he said.

Pichay said that when he complained about this to the Arroyos, the latter authorized the release of around P700 million using local funds.

"E.C. de Leon did not get the project," Pichay said. "I can't understand why Sen. Ping Lacson has to fabricate documents involving me."

House inquiry

The House of Representatives is out here on reopening its inquiry into the alleged World Bank-blasted Filipino contractors (E.C. de Leon, Circle Most International Construction and Development Corp. and CM Pancho Construction Inc.).

Speaker Prospero Nograles said that "as a lawyer," he cautioned prosecutors against Mike Arroyo and the congressman "will hearsay."

"If there are no complainants, it is just gossip. The elections are near, so we should expect all these things in Bataan around," Nograles said at a press conference.

He added: "We have had no complaints against any congressman ... Due process requires face-to-face confrontation; we can't just let accusations fly like that."

Nograles said he had left it to the House committee on public works—whose leadership had exonerated the blacklisted Filipino contractors—to decide whether to reopen the inquiry that was wrapped up after two hearings.

Cavite Rep. Crispin Remulla said those cases if the House obtained a copy of the World Bank report, "it will just make for interesting reading." With reports from Christine F. Fajardo and DJC. Cabacungan Jr.

Mystery man gives away money in NYC

From page A1

day out on a counter in the heart of Times Square giving money to hundreds of people waiting in temperatures well below freezing.

The well-built man pounded by photochrom guards wore wraparound black glasses and a wool hat pulled low over his head.

Some people waited for more than five hours to reach a makeshift window marked "Ballout Booth" where they received at least $50, sometimes much more.

Many of those queuing were victims of the severe US economic downturn. Tens of thousands have lost their jobs in New York alone.

"I'm very appreciative. I might give some to my mother," Leon McNeil, 25, said after being handed a $50 bill. He was laid off by troubled department store Macy's last December.

News of the giveaway spread fast by phone. McNeil said that he couldn't believe the story at first.

Then he thought: "It's New York and it's Times Square."

Ballout Bill's video is partly a publicity stunt for a new website, www.balloutbooth.com, where you can post videos advertising promotions, services, and personal messages.

But the idea is also to help ordinary people in the same way that the US government is bailing out banks and other corporations, according to Drew Tybus, a spokesperson for the website.

Tybus said about $300,000 in cash would be dished out in several US cities.

"Rather than getting a TV commercial during the Superbowl, the idea was to give people a chance to make some money ... We all know someone who's been affected," he said.

All people had to do was tell their problems to an unknown standing in the street with a microphone and camera.

"My mother is dying to bed," said Mario, a frail man who wore cowboy boots and carried a walking stick.

"Let's see what Ballout Bill says," the assistant replied, hugging Mario.

Ballout Bill announced "I'm going to give $150."

A man named Curtis told Ballout Bill that he was an Iraq war veteran who owed $500 in rent and was unable to pay for basic necessities. Curtis said both his parents were recently hospitalized.

The man walked off with two $50 bills.

Homeless man Juan Vasquez, 45, said he was grateful that Ballout Bill had given him $140.

"That should last me three days for washing my clothes, food, cigarettes. To a person who's got nothing, that's a lot," Vasquez said.

Tuesday was the "Ballout Booth's" second and last day in New York. It's next stops are Philadelphia, Boston and Philadelphia, Tybus said.

Just who is this mystery man with the deep pockets?

"Ballout Bill and call him himself name," Tybus said. "We assure there's no mask of a rich Sheep. We know he's got money to spend, something to do with it."

But for anyone thinking of taking the money for nothing scam, Tybus had a warning.

"Those guys standing around here and also in the hoods ... they're still busy cops. And they're armed," he said. AFP

Original angels

Lozada believed he was abducted by members of the Presidential Security Group and the police to keep him from talking about the $70 deal to wire electronically government offices in the Philippines, Pichay said.

He added: "Senator Ping, look for other victims. Spare the Flor Gentleman, Jing Paras and myself from your dirty play ... I challenge the World Bank to name one official report on the matter so that I can file necessary charges against irresponsible people."

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Lozada: FG casts very long shadow in gov't

From page A1

And equally surprising to him was the ostensible lack of public indignation over the allegations.

"When people are abused nine and core again, they learn helplessness," Lozada said. "What I'd like to see is justice be served so that the children will see that in our country, those who make mistakes, would not be the ones who are up on trial."

Lozada and his supporters yesterday marked his alleged abduction on Feb. 3, 2006, by state agents with a memorable tasting the exact taken by his agents.

"Let us remember the five anniversary of Jun Lozada's abduction as a reminder that the weak cannot be snatched away from us" said Jimmy Bernabe of the Black and White Movement that led the 5k-vehicle convoy.

The convoy, including members of civil society and religious groups, are out from the Ninoy Aquino International airport where Lozada's seven-hour "abduction" began, blowing their horns as a sign of unity in fighting he the truth.

Original angels

Lozada believed he was abducted by members of the Presidential Security Group and the police to keep him from talking about the $70 deal to wire electronically government offices in the

LIFE GOES ON TABLE Lozada is accompanied by his aide-de-camp Jimmy Bernabe as he recounts the four-year ordeal he went through in Feb. 3, 2006. (ERWIN LOZADA)

biggest corruption scandal to hit the Arroyo administration.

The convoy included the 32 cars who formed a human shield when Lozada appeared at La Salle Greenhills upon his release and said that his former boss, now Social Security System chief Romulo Neri, had told him to "commit the greed" of those getting kickbacks from the NBN-ZTE deal.

"They are my original angels," Lozada said of the cars.

The shirts, shirtless, and bullcoats at yesterday's event were all green and white, which stood for truth and courage.

The convoy stopped at every place where Lozada's abductors brought him and fastened recently to his recollection of what had transpired there.

From the airport, Lozada and his abductors passed by the office of Philippine Steam Corporation where he was brought to Camp Crame.

Lozada then passed by the Philippine Navy headquarters in Fort Bonifacio, where he was forced to call him another former boss, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, who said that the man he was with were from "the government."

Lozada was taken to a gas station on South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), 20 kilometers from Fort Bonifacio, where he was told to stop using his phone. He said here he realized that he might be brought to Cavite to be killed.

Prayer, security request

"My only prayer then was for my body to be found," Lozada said.

The convoy proceeded to Calamba, Laguna, instead of Los Baños, where Lozada was originally brought, because he wanted to see the ancestral home of his lawyer, Sr. Jose Roni.

The group then went to a gas station at the north-bound lane of SLEx where Lozada recalled being made to write a "security request" to then Philippine National Police chief Arturo Lomibao and Senior Superintendent Jr. to begin entire his being taken by unknown men.

Because of heavy traffic, the group decided to skip the pork restaurant along C.5 Road in Libis, Quezon City where Lozada said he was asked to sign an affidavit about the NBN-ZTE deal "for the creation of blackmailing."

After Lozada's recounting of his experience at every stop, those who joined him sang "Ang Bayan Ko" and released white doves, put their hands on their chests, or flashed the "Laban" sign long associated with the Filipinos' victory against dictatorship and democracy.

'He is my idol'

Some people in the stops had their pictures taken with Lozada.

One woman told Lozada she believed his stories testimony.

Joseph Campoverg, 42, said: "We're idealistic and now we're here from Bataan, I didn't really movie."

Roman Ramos, an 11-year-old out-of-school youth who patiently waited for Lozada at Rizal's house in Calamba, Brgy. himself on Lozada and hugged him tight.

"He is my idol because he told the truth," Ramos said.

Green passports still valid

By Cynthia D. Balana

SO HERE TO SURVIVE IF YOU ARE STILL THE holder of a soon-to-be-invalid Philippine passport.

The green passport is still valid until the expiration dates noted in the travel document.

Rayzul Hingpit, spokesperson of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), made the clarification yesterday after reports about confusion among passport holders washed their offices. At the same time, Manglibis requested the international community to honor the old passports until their expiration date.

In July 2007, the DFA began issuing machine-related machine readable passports (MRPs) with maroon cover to comply with standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The passport is a popular target of counterfeiters, due largely to relatively liberal visa requirements for Filipino traveling to destinations such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and other Asian countries.

The MRP was designed to prevent tampering through the use of special features embedded on the passport cover. Fingerprints are registered on the passport, with microprinting on the data page.

With a tamper-proof microchip containing personal information and the identification of the holder, the electronic or e-passport may be out in April this year.

It will be issued initially to diplomats and government officials, and will be offered later to the public by December, according to a foreign affairs official who declined to be identified.

With the issuance of the new travel documents, the Philippines will join 61 other countries that have e-passports, said Assistant Secretary for Consular Affairs Henrique Laviña in a statement.

The MRP enhanced security features means faster processing at immigration lines abroad, added Foreign Affairs Secretary Alberto Romulo.

It takes at least seven days to process MRPs. An applicant pays a fee of P600 for processing his MRP or P950 if he is in a rush.

Giesecke Technologies, a French company, won the contract to supply the country with e-passports.

Wanted Korean back in immigration jail

A KOREAN FUGITIVE WHO escaped from the Bureau of Immigration (BI) jail in Bicutan, Taguig City, is back in his cell after he surrendered yesterday to Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan.

Libanan said Byung Kyu-Choi, who is wanted in his country for large-scale fraud and swindling, will immediately be deported to Korea.

Choi told Libanan he decided to give up as he could no longer stand the pressure of the massive manhunt mounted for him.

Libanan said 18 operatives had identified Choi's hideout and surveillance on him before he surrendered.

He said two cause of Choi's companions had volunteered information on his possible whereabouts.

The Korean Embassy and Korean Association helped in the hunt for the fugitive.

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LSGH homecoming set

SILVER JUBILARIAN Class '84 of La Salle Green Hills high school will host this year's alumni homecoming on Feb. 7 on the Ortigas Avenue campus.

The celebration is doubly significant as LSGH celebrates this year its golden Jubilee. School president Br. Felipe Belleza FSC has enjoined all alumni to join the festivities that will begin at 5pm.

Dubbed "Dito, Kwiki, Dito, Never Shall We Fail," the celebration will feature a Mass at 5 p.m. at the Sentosal Shrine of the Divine Child on campus, dinner, awards and a concert.

The homecoming is also significant for Class '84, the second batch to graduate from the high school, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Class '84 chairBatch Antonio has enjoined all batch members to make it to the homecoming.

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OPINION

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Senate is not a court

FOR THE UMPTEENTH TIME, SEN. MIRIAM DEFENsor Santiago has repeated her view that World Bank officials cannot be summoned to a congressional hearing. Okay, we get it, the senator is an expert in international law, but must she, in the end, counteract the ridiculous scandal always accompanies the negative? We cannot compel World Bank investigators to testify, but we can

EDITORIAL

resolutely try to talk to the senior or the other witnesses and source the rumors or other documents.

The notion that it is now up to the World Bank, whose sanctions board banned or suspended three Filipino contractors from bank-funded projects because of collusion, to provide the Senate with the information it needs in order to acquire jurisdiction over the case is nonsensical. It says the bruises of the institutionalized nitidity the people have come to expect from it.

The subservient Defensor mentality reassesses the other day makes for sickening reading. "I am hoping that the bank itself will voluntarily waive its immunity and give us documents that might lead to the identification of certain Filipino politicians or other public officials who may have facilitated the alleged collusion," she said, not unreasonably. Unfortunately, the moment for her statesmen reminders resembling for responsibility in this context, her "appeal" for the bank's help comes across as pathetic. "I appealed to World Bank [Country] Director [Ian] Hoffman...in the interest of Philippine public service and our anti-corruption campaign, to voluntarily release the documents to the committee." Has the Philippines been reduced to begging outside parties for proof of its country's corruption?

Santiago now finds herself in a bind. After she stormed out of the Senate hall last month, charging there was an attempt to cast her from the chairmanship of the economic affairs committee to prevent her from leading the investigation into the collusion scandal, she retained her seat and reconvened the investigation. Before that first hearing, and memorably in the course of it, she condemned the contractors as corrupt (and twitted her counterpart congressmen for handling the contractors obsequiously, to their own hearing).

The name of John Miguel Arroyo, the President's husband, came up during that hearing, but rather tangentially to the matter at hand. (Sen. Panfilo Lacson established that Arroyo had a relationship with Eduardo de Leon, the owner of the Filipino company the World Bank banned permanently, but not his interest in a bank-funded project.) Since then, of course, reports have asserted that the President's husband was in fact named by witnesses ruling part in the bank probe.

Santiago's response to this casualty of information has been quite puzzling: she reacted as a lawyer, rather than as a legislator. She said she could not use unofficial documents to run after parties in collusion, indicating last consensus with the trial court she used to run. There are plenty of official documents or solidly sourced reports available, going back to the first intimations of collusion detected by the World Bank in 2002, to justify a closer look at the way the Department of Public Works and Highways conducts the biddings.

The World Bank's Sanctions Board decision regarding De Leon's company notes that it had been found to have "engaged in corrupt, collusive and other fraudulent practices in connection with multiple rounds of bidding for two road construction and rehabilitation contracts under this World Bank-financed project." Several more reports have also already been published, in one instance alleging that a Japanese contractor was told about Arroyo's illegal role in the bidding, in another instance detailing the contending struggle between the DPWH and the World Bank to clean up bidding procedures. Surely any of this is a start?

But Santiago issued a pronouncement: "The news item is hearsay and therefore has no probative value. "To which the concerned citizen's proper response ought to be: So what? The role of the investigating committee that Santiago fought to lead is not in fact to "run after" collusive contractors; it is first to establish, according to the Senator's own standards, whether collusion did take place, and second and most important, to prevent such collusion from happening again. To say the Senate needs evidence of undoubted probative value before it can draft the laws the country needs is to turn a political branch of government into another judiciary

Publisher Isaac Nubla

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The danger of barangays having too much money

"LACK OF FUNDS" IS MOST often the complaint of many poor barangays. But too much money is sometimes worse, as shown by the case of the posh Barangay San Lorenzo, an exclusive village in Makati, the richest barangay in the Philippines. Barangay San Lorenzo has a budget of P181 million in a year and yet, according to some of its residents, it has one of "the most unkempt, decrepit barangay buildings, except for a few exceptions," in the country.

"Where does the money go?" a handout from "very concerned residents" asked. "We have not seen improvements nearly commensurate to that amount. Where is the proper accounting, auditing and transparency promised in the campaign speeches?"

Recently, in an administrative complaint for dishonesty and misconduct in office by San Lorenzo Village residents, Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay suspended barangay chairman Joshua John Jauregui for 90 days, implementing a resolution of the city council. In the resolution, the 13 councilors said that based on pleadings and documents submitted, the evidence of guilt of Jauregui was "strong."

The principal complainants—barangay kagawads Brenda Maya, Dana Lapitz Plantilasan, Brigida Silva, Jocelyn Fernandez and Norman Cortes—claimed that Jauregui could not explain P370 million worth of disbursements in barangay funds. They also said Jauregui bought 3,000 prefabricated lampposts worth nearly P44 million but installed only 500, leaving 470 pieces inside a warehouse rented at P50,000 a month.

Jauregui's excuse: The lampposts are under lifetime warranty anyway and so, even if he does not use them today, the barangay may still use them in the future.

In the complaint filed by San Lorenzo residents with the city council, they noted that since Jauregui assumed office in 2005, he has spent a total of P617 million (borne huge! That's only one barangay, mind you).

"If the amounts spent by personnel services, mandatory allocations for priority projects of the City of Makati and various subsidies (e.g. San Lorenzo Village Association, Kadugo Inc. Jagpe 1 and 3, Makati Commercial Estates Association, etc.) during this period are deducted (totaling an estimated P359 million), there remains a very substantial balance in the amount of approximately P258 million," the complainants said.

The same complaint said that on May 6, 2009, Jauregui "caused the issuance of check No. 000001 in the amount of P180,000 allegedly as financial assistance to the Down Syndrome Association of the Philippines ... However, upon verification with DSAP through a telephone interview, Antonio O. Pario, secretary and member of its Board of Trustees who has personal knowledge over the donation actually received by DSAP denied having received the said check or said amount from the barangay. Further, Ma. Bedoria F. Arbeiter, DSAP's operations manager who received donations for DSAP, admitted complainants Bermudez and Cortes that DSAP indeed has not received said check or any amount from the barangay. According to Ms Dela Paz, as a matter of policy and practice, DSAP issues the corresponding official receipts for every donation DSAP receives and there is no such official receipt appearing in their records."

Jauregui also "caused the issuance of check no. 000182 in the amount of P5,750,000 payable to A.G. Surplus cash Trading allegedly as payment for the 'purchase of a computer shed'.... However, a careful inspection of the public areas within the territorial jurisdiction of Barangay San Lorenzo reveals that no such computer shed has been installed or delivered as of this date."

The handout distributed by San Lorenzo residents also said that between June 4 and July 31, 2008, 32 barangay checks for amounts totaling P6 million were issued to Urban Botanical Garden, a non-stock community of squatters near the Makati Medical Center, for various projects. The checks were endorsed through the Jauregui wife, Gabenzo (BE) whose chair and six council members, ranging from 15-to 19-year-old, were lambasted by the barangay chairman.

The same handout claims Jauregui spent "millions for his induction at the ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel and for parties and trips as national executive vice president of the Jaycees."

Binay, who is the proper accounting of the money left by the previous barangay captain, which is about P300 million (2005) and the three years allocated budget amounting to approximately P360 million?" the residents asked.

A barangay chairman's monthly salary is only P14,000 but Jauregui has an "array of luxury cars—a new Mercedes Benz, Toyota Sequoia, Mitsubishi Montero, etc.," according to the handout.

There are no marked improvements in the barangay, the handout continued, and "no infrastructures, big projects or major expenditures can be seen" from the barangay hall for the past three years due big San lorenzo's reputation.)

As of this writing, there is still no explanation received from Jauregui.

The moral of the whole story is that having too much money is worse than having too little. Too much money is corruption in which many succumb. And that corruption has seeped down from the top to the lowest government unit, the barangay. Barangay elections, which ought to bring democracy to the lowest community, only brought corruption there instead.

Barangays ought to be left appointed from respected members of the community for generations, the barangay captain was supervised and elected by his constituents. Then the politicians decided to burden/ wound with this arrangement and have the barangay officials elected. A barangay position then became the target of fortune hunters.

In no have the spectacle of barangay San Lorenzo.

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Baselines: A primer for beginners

Passion for Reason

Raul C. Pangalangan

WHAT IS THE "BASELINES" DEBATE ALL about? What really is the difference between the Senate version (foolishly) lifted by some to the "regional Guantanamo" under the Hontiveros-Baraquel-Villa bill and the House version (labeled as the archipelagic approach)?

The UP Center of Integrative and Development Studies has engaged, for the controversy's resolution, the services of Professor Jay Batongbacal, UP Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea director, and Professor Aileen Baviera, UP political science professor. Both are experts in international law and maritime boundaries.

Baselines are the outer points along the coastline from which we measure our claims over the seas. Inside us from where we draw the 200 nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone, wherein we alone can exploit the natural resources. It tells us from where we draw the territorial shelf (the seabed and subsoil through the natural prolongation of our land mass) wherein we alone can extract oil, gas and mining deposits. It tells us the extent of the territorial sea where we are obliged to allow only "innocent passage" for ships.

The "normal baseline" is usually a no-brainer. The coastline of mainland Asia, the Pacific or Atlantic coasts of the United States, or the coast of Chinal or islands (Mask of Australia), that means merely tracing the low-water line along the coast.

Our problem however is geography. If we adopted normal baselines, we would draw baselines around each of our lobbed 7,100 islands. Our biggest concern therefore is to ensure control over the "waters around, between, and connecting the islands." Stated differently, should we have to cross international waters just to go during at the Tubbataha Reef right smack in the middle of the Sulu Sea?

To avoid this, we enclose all those waters within "archipelagic baselines" that link the outermost islands along the general contour of the archipelago. This is important because our territory was initially defined by the 1898 Treaty of Paris that ended the Spanish-American War when Spain sold us for 20 million bits, ten dollars. And what was sold? "The archipelago known as the Philippine Islands, and comprehending the islands lying within the following (Treaty) lines: ... " They sold "the islands, but what about the waters? Well, the answer was launched by our Congress in 1961, through our old and subsisting Baselines Law which said that all the waters between the outermost islands and the "baseline" are the part of our territorial sea (over which we exercise sovereign control).

From newspaper accounts, apparently what the Senate adopted was a combination of archipelagic baselines (for the main archipelago) with the option to fix normal baselines for the islands we claim in the disputed Spratly Islands group. For these, we use a "regime of islands" that will draw baselines on an island-to-island basis, rather than a package deal under "archipelagos." In contrast, the House says only archipelagic baselines that encompass all the islands including Layman. Those claimed in the Spratly Islands group. Several misconceptions have come across.

One, the Senate version doesn't bargain away our Spratley claims. In the words of Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, it is still a matter of "legal engineering." The unconditional claims are contained in archipelagic baselines, while we retain the option to draw individualized baselines for islands within the archipelago dispositions.

Two, in fact, until the Senate version, the entire Philippine archipelago was actually drawn not upon the Johnson Islands group, which we claimed only in a 1978 decree by President Ferdinand Marcos, the Senate version indeed translates that claim of title over land and presto it to the sea.

Three, it is a misnomer to call the Senate version as the "regime of islands." If that were so, it would have been uncontroversial outright. Instead the Constitution proclaims us as an "archipelago" and we have no choice but to adopt archipelagic baselines that encompass the integrity of our land and maritime territory. What the Senate adopted is a mixed formula that combines archipelagic baselines for the main archipelago and a "regime of islands" for the disputed islands.

Fourth, indeed, even the limited "regime of islands" option can face the problem of interconnectivity, since the Constitution allow us to carve out the Spratlys from the Philippine archipelago. It can imagine several ways by which that can be done. But when the Constitution clearly calls for archipelagic lines, can a mere statute say that we should a few islands from those archipelagic baselines? That will invite a direct challenge before the Supreme Court.

Fifth, for the "legal engineering" would have to come to terms with political engineering as well. The formula of the House puts all the islands, disputed and unclaimed, to one basket, winner takes all. The Senate formula is more nuanced: it reserves to law what we possess in fact, and leaves struggle zones for the islands we claim but do not possess. It is also more risky, because it will place us in some on-one contest to reclaim/ reinforce/ with each of the other claimants. This is not to say that the House formula claims any less, but since it is a package deal, it avoids the individualized confrontations on each and every contested island.

Finally, the basic underlying premise is that by legislating baselines, we establish our title over the contested islands. It's actually the other way around; baselines are drawn from islands owned by a state. First, we should reassert the sovereignty on the side over the islands, and then the baselines determine exactly how much of the surrounding seas we can claim.

A coalition based on patronage

ANALYSIS

Armando Doronila

THE PROPOSED MERGER OF LAKAS-CMD, THE largest party in the House of Representatives, and Kampi, the party of President Macapagal Arroyo, has crafted on the thorny issue of the oath by the President to unite "to face the electoral challenge of 2010 with righteousness and confidence."

The merger is anchored on the long-running Philippine historical tradition of monolithic party building dictated from the top. The tradition dates back to the dominance of President Manuel Quezon's Nacionalista Party from 1917, up to Ferdinand Marcos' Kilusang ng Bagong Lipunan, and until recently Lakas-CMD, the political machine of President Fidel Ramos.

President Arroyo is not reliving the lack of this tradition built on the undemocratic concept of single-party states prevalent in authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia during the 1970s and 1980s. It is more understanding the party to avoid the outcome of the 2007 election, in which the opposition enjoyed its most robust and viable democratic challenge in the past two party systems (from 1946 to 1972) when power alternately changed hands between the Liberal and Nacionalista parties.

President Arroyo is meaner when she put pressure on the leadership of Lakas-CMD and Kampi to form a monolithic

Any award for best show-biz stars in real—not reel—life?

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE sponsors and winners of the 2008 Metro Manila Film Festival. The officers and judges should be commended for giving credits and merit where these are due; for the best picture, best actor/actress, best direction, and for all the best in the other categories.

What we haven't heard of, however, are celebrities who are winners in their real, not reel, lives as husband, wife, father or mother. It is but fair and proper to also honor these personalities who, all these years, ...and maybe unknown to them! How—have kept their marriage vows sacred and unblemished by any marital controversy or scandal. I think that their performances as parents is as important as, if not more important than, their success in the movies.

I'm not thinking of couples who secretly feed the kiss, but of couples who—for 30 years at the least—have weathered the lots of time in silent, faithful bliss. The longer the union, the higher the honor. These stars, despite the glittering presence of their younger counterparts, still have that luster to be role models and should make a difference in other people's lives.

The public is presently clueless on who these celebrities are because of the indifference of media (especially television), which dwell more on what is wrong rather than what is right in the world of entertainment. I need not be specific here: suffice it to say that even as out of school kid knows who are doing and dropping with each other; quarrelling, or just divorced, not to mention those who are carrying whose child. Thanks to tsismosapapers on TV and radio and in the newspapers.

Seldom featuring model celebrity parents, must talk shows invite and subject young stars to very embarrassing and intrusive questions just to satisfy the malice of the hosts and delight a fanatical studio audience. It seems that to survive and succeed in the competition, a show biz talk show should focus more on the bad and the ugly, and play deaf and dumb to the good and the pleasant. Television has indeed the public into feeding more on payment in what is scandalous rather than in what is wholesome and marvelous.

LETTERS

The negative trend in entertainment media should be reversed and reversed by the media themselves. Concerned leaders of the entertainment industry ought to search for and formally honor celebrity parents and their families who are models of our country in order that their examples multiply. Television should help inspire talents to not only become successful stars on TV screen but also to serve as inspiring and guiding stars for others. I hope this unsolicited letter will reach the hearts of some leaders like Chairman Boying Remulla, Boots Anson-Roa, Charo Santos and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada so they may initiate the search for this rare and endangered breed of celebrity role.

—PORFIRIO I. HUBILLA JR.
294 Lake Ave., Colonia,
Sta. Rosa, Laguna

CJ PUNO: His call for "masculinos" to mobilize seats him as a presidential timber

Will other presidential wannabes do a Panfilo Lacson?

SEN. PANFILO LACSON HAS publicly declared he will defer his quest for the presidency in favor of Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno should the latter decide to run for president in year 2010.

Perhaps, Chief Justice Puno would be inspired to seriously consider vying for the presidency in year 2010 if all the opposition presidential contenders—namely: Manny Villar, Mar Roxas and Senators Legarda, Escudero and Lacson, first will they?

The overwhelmingness of the call for the Chief Justice to seek the presidency in 2010 and to lead and deliver the Philippines from the morass of corruption and moral depravity is now being felt all over the country. We hope the Chief Justice will seriously consider the people's wish.

—REX E. BOCK
A-8 Cattleya Condominium,
1016 Adelaide St., Legaspi Village,
Makati City

mobile news

Puno's morality play bothersome

IT IS BOTHERSOME THAT Chief Justice Reynato Puno should lean on the "moral force" instead of the force of law in explaining his action on the Ginebra thing case. Morality is such a tenuous matter that despite thousands of years of discussions by philosophers and saints, mankind still has to come to a consensus about its terms. In fact, wars and violence can come up to do-or-die because of differences about what constitutes "morality".

When asked to comment by the business about the Lambat thing controversy that seemingly roused the moros to impeach him, the Chief Justice said: "You look at it more deeply ... from its various dimensions. That's why we're in crisis for the moral forces of the country to manifest themselves. They should come to the aid of the rule of law. They should not be so dismissive of the rule of law, serving the destiny of our people." (T. Roberto Nieves also responded and said that it was Puno, a Methodist, who pointed out that the "justice system is based on our morality which is based on our spirituality" (Inquirer, 1/15/09).

I thought all along that Augustinian Canon Justices are armed by our Constitution with the task to interpret our laws. That is why the system is supposed to collect the opinions of the majority of the members of the en banc and reasons rogers and why in the law for justices and judges are themselves not above the law. In these days when there is most emphasis on governance. That is why I humbly think that Chief Justice Puno owes our people an explanation why his judgment should outweigh the judgments of 14 other members of the tribunal, when the Constitution says that a decision must have the concurrence of only a majority of the court and not unanimity. He should also explain what he meant by "doctrinal" value, and whether the Constitution requires that for a majority decision to be valid. In this way he will enlighten thousands of judges, lawyers and law students, not to mention the general public, and sometimes to their legal education. As far as I know, justices all have blood of ogres inside that they want to sweep each other to power who is subject to the vagaries of all points to an impossibility.

As for morality, what is moral to one person or to a culture may not be moral to others. That is why religious claims have resorted to written laws, agreed on by the people themselves through their elected representatives. Religion is represented from the state because it is a guarantee of ideas. As for "moral leaders," is it moral for preachers (whether self-anointed or appointed by church members) who nevertheless are mere human beings, to flaunt their public followers of their hard-earned money by threatening them with hell and brimstone or falsely promising them manna from heaven as reward?

It is morality with the basis for civic relations, what is the need for laws? The justices and judges should all shed their robes and put on the preachers' garments, and also quit their steady remuneration in exchange for perhaps, the more lucrative "offerings" of the naive fellowmen of spiritual leaders.

—MANUEL I. LLAMAS
mlalamas@yahoo.com

Yes, corruption causes hunger!

ECONOMIST JOSEPH ABHAL under Alarm MacDonald stated, during a forum, that corruption is a manifestation of poor governance as well as of the lack of transparent, accountable management and control systems. These symptoms are very visible in the Arroyo administration.

MacDonald also said "Corruption helps to promote hunger and fear and it is a direct assault on human rights."

A recent news item recalling Ayala Alabang, he can go and Rockwell church and watch Indian children with their tambol (drums) singing "Indian ayan ang mahin niyo. Ate, Mapa bahit magkano basta galing sa puso niyo." Bread, do, bring on your troubles, any amount will do as long as it comes from your heart.) Will GMA's heart touch if she hears this plaintive song, hopefully it is a yes answer for food?

And what about the endless killings of media people, the countless enforced disappearances like the one that victim Jonas Burgos, publisher-banner Jun Burgos, leaders of Bayan Muna, and suspected operatives of the New People's Army?

And what about the billions of pesos stashed in the bank accounts of GMA cronies and allies? Thirty percent of the more than a trillion peso budget for 2009 will go to their pockets. Think about it, this 30 percent via kickbacks can be spent instead for Bulacan scholarships, relocation sites for displaced squatters, livelihood programs for inmates and OFWs, and loans for small farmers so they can buy farm inputs and cushion the effect of the economic crisis.

I hope Macdonald's technical people will tell us Filipinos that we need a law punishing the corrupt with "death by frying squad."

—JESUS C. VALENCIA
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Bagong Lipunan
Condominium, Taguig City

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Across the NATION

Rebs attack mayor's house, are repelled

KIBLAWAN, DAVAO DEL SUR—Suspected communist rebels stormed the compound of Mayor Arsenio Cantoneros of this town but were unable to get past the guard house due to the presence of soldiers in the sprawling place of property, the police said Thursday.

Even then, the rebels managed to disarm the four guard detailed at the gate during the aborted attack early Wednesday, according to Insp. Tranquilino Tobinada, Bagumbayan police chief.

Tobinada said Cantoneros and his family were inside the house, which is at the rear side of the compound, in Barangay Lanton during the attack but none of them were harmed.

Chief Supt. Constancio Chiquito Jr., Davao del Sur police chief, said soldiers were sent to the area in response to reports that *New People's Army* rebels will launch attacks there.

In Tulunan, North Cotabato, which shares a border with the town, at least 300 families fled following clashes between soldiers and rebels on Wednesday.

A report from the Tulunan social welfare office indicated that most of the evacuees were members of Manobo communities.

The report said although the clashes took place away from the communities, residents sought refuge in the village center for fear of being caught in the crossfire.

Lt. Col. Alfredo Sildgaro, chief of the Army's 57th Infantry Battalion, said five rebels earlier ambushed a group of soldiers.

The ambush, he said, resulted in a brief clash that resulted in the death of a certain Commander Jolondo.

Sildgaro said the guerrillas that ambushed his men could be part of a larger NPA group, which ambushed and killed three police officers in Sumilao, Bukidnon on Monday.

In North Cotabato, police said whoppers were filed against NPA rebels said to be responsible for the Jan. 19 attacks on the municipal hall, and the police and fire station of Tampilisan town.

Three policemen and a civilian were injured in the simultaneous attacks.

Senior Supt. Rolvic Rimando, South Cotabato provincial police chief, said charges against Emanuel Hernandez, alias Commander Bobo, and his men were filed at the provincial prosecutor's office on Tuesday. *Orlando Bitoy, Edwin Fernandez and Agalin Jimin, Inquirer Mindanao*

MARKET TALK Vendors spend idle time chatting as they watch over a variety of dried fish at the Mapa City Public Market.

Oil spill keeps punishing mangroves

By Nestor P Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—MANGROVES IN Guimaras continue to suffer from the effects of one of the country's worst oil spill almost three years ago.

Scientists have discovered severe photosynthesis disturbance (leaf water contamination) by the oil spill, which poisoned to the roots/seedlings of the mangroves.

Dr. Hesiquio Subido, program manager of the University of the Philippines in the Visayas (UPV) Oil Spill Response Project, said recent samplings on mangroves showed "alarming" among trees.

This is characterized by the pale color of mangrove saplings instead of its normal green appearance.

"This can be attributed to the effects of the oil contamination," Subido said in a briefing on Wednesday attended by Inq. Pia Cayetano.

Cayetano chaired the Senate committee on environment when the oil spill occurred on Aug. 11, 2006 after the MT Solar 1, chartered by Petron Corp., sank in stormy seas southeast of Guimaras and spilled more than 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel oil it was transporting from Bataan to Guimaras.

Subido said they took samples of mangroves trees affected with different dying field studies on Jan. 16-19 at the 1,343-hectare Taklong Island National Marine Reserve (Tinmar) in Nueva Valencia town, the hardest hit by the oil spill among the island province's five municipalities.

He said they inspected the growth of three mangrove trees to be situated because of the oil-tar particles.

Earlier studies conducted among mangroves, which suffered most from the oil sludge, showed their continued defoliation and the reduction of leaf size and canopy cover.

"The recent findings support our earlier conclusions that there appears to marine ecosystem continue to persist despite signs of recovery," Subido told the Inquirer.

Scientific studies also showed abnormalities in breeding and growth of mangroves, sea grass, marine animals and sea-microbes, which were attributed mainly to the contamination of the marine environment by bunker fuel from the stricken vessel.

But Subido cited the need for additional studies because the mangroves still showed the effects of the oil spill three years after it occurred.

Cayetano said senate committee studies should also be conducted on the conditions of residents who suffered from the oil spill and the impact of rehabilitation programs on them.

During the same briefing, Provincial Board Member Josephine de la Cruz said that a significant amount of funds allotted for Guimaras have not been released to the province.

The Save Our Seas Foundation-Guimaras, a nongovernment organization, said the livelihood of residents has not fully recovered because of decreased fish catch.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ DAGUPAN CITY

Hospital surgeon slain

THE CHIEF surgeon of the Bauso Training and Regional Medical Center in San Fernando City, La Union, was shot dead Monday by a lone gunman while he was on his way home to La Paz town, police said.

Dr. Noel Bautista, 64, was driving his car and stopped at Ortega and Arellano Streets in San Fernando at about 6 p.m. when the gunman approached his car and shot him. The gunman fled on a motorcycle. Bautista was taken to the Lorma Hospital but died while undergoing treatment, reports said.

La Union police director Senior Supt. Raul Tabin said Bautista's relatives had told investigators that the doctor had no perceived enemies and had not received threats before the attack. *Yolanda Bordio, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

■ BACOLOD CITY

NFA to double supply

THE NATIONAL Food Authority would double its rice supply in Negros Occidental next week to ease prices down. NFA provincial head Pedrito Gerasmio said Thursday.

He said that 150,000 bags of rice from Siargao would arrive by the middle of this month.

Benito Nacion, president of the Grains Traders Confederation Negros Occidental chapter, said a truck of regular milled rice that had cost P1,200 at the wholesale the month would now cost P1,000 to P1,050. *AMB*

The truck drive up the retail price to P28 per kg, Nacion said. *Carlo P Cuevas, Inquirer Visayas*

■ DAVAO DEL SUR

Strong winds hit villages

THE PHILIPPINE Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) in Southern Mindanao said winds that destroyed several structures—including houses and school buildings—that hard hit villages have been triggered by the tail end of a cold front that brought bad weather to Mindanao on Sunday.

Jerry Pedrico, Pagasa chief in the region, studied the villages of Poblacion and New Bacon here on Tuesday.

Mayor Jerry Limsaying said the winds damaged about P1 million in crops and pieces of property. *Orlando B. Dioso and Edwin Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao*

A P5 MONTHLY contribution from each resident of Sitio Dumalipata in Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya, would go a long way to repair the community's hanging bridge.

Villagers dip into their pockets to fix bridges

By Ben Rhoss Elores
Inquirer Northern Luzon

QUEZON, NUEVA VIZCAYA—KAGAWAD Ben Lacsamana is not the right word but they would not accept if the money was for an investment or a corporate thing, Lacsamana said.

Residents of Sitio Dumalipata, an agricultural village, have started contributing P5 monthly to the community's treasury to pool funds for the repair of their hanging bridges under the project "Kung ayaw mag-bigay" (Pledge of Life).

More than P2,000 have been raised since 114 families in Dumalipata, most of them Ilocano migrants, launched the project in September last year to repair at least two hanging bridges.

Residents, personnel of the PAC Mining Corp. and the local government pooled materials and provided labor to build those bridges. The mining firm is considering replication activities in Barangay Imugan.

"These bridges are important to us because they are our link to market our products and for the education of our children," said Brenda Garcia, 36, a member of the Dumalipata Women's Organization (DWO) and the Bayugan Organization (BPO), which is enforcing the monthly contributions.

The hanging bridges are 130 meters and are made of rubber and plastic.

Garcia said the villagers proposed the system of contribution after the village was struck by strong typhoons in recent years. Whenever typhoons hit the area, their rivers would swell, thereby their hanging bridges and isolate them from the town center.

During those times, their products and crops—orange, banana and rice—failed to reach the market and were left to rot.

Their children also failed to attend classes for weeks, forcing them to drop out of school.

"That is why the rate of school dropout here is high because of the unrepaired hanging bridges. It was very difficult for us to reach our land and call for help. Help only came after waiting for so long," Garcia said.

She said the bridge is also used in bringing residents to flexible concrete.

Only 24 LGUs complying with waste system laws

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Only 24 of 120 local governments in Central Luzon have set up material recovery facilities (MRFs), making them ill-prepared to manage the 1,236 billion tons per day of garbage expected to be generated in the region by 2017, reports showed.

The low compliance rate, united eight years after the passage of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2001, has prompted the Ecological Solid Waste Management Commission (ESWMC) to study the filing of administrative complaints against erring local governments, Oscar Calimlim Jr., regional director of the Environmental Management Bureau said on Thursday.

"There has been no intervention at the moment [from the ESWMC] but complaints are being considered," Calimlim said.

He said Antonio Principe, regional executive director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, would initiate the filing of cases.

Principe has not answered the reporter's queries on his issue.

Calimlim said the cases could be filed either with the Department of the Interior and Local Government or with the Office of the Ombudsman.

Garbage load

Bella Cabral, solid waste management coordinator in the region's DENR, said local governments would have "to take serious note before the garbage problem becomes unmanageable."

An DMB report on disposal waste generation showed that Central Luzon's population of 10.5 million in 2008 produced around 11,246 tons of waste daily.

The projections up to 2017 were based on the average annual growth rate and average per capita generation of solid waste in the region's provinces.

The four population growth rate vis-à-vis the sizable daily waste generate rate need "serious attention soon," said Cabral.

But as things have gone, only 35 or 27 percent of 130 local governments in the region have formulated their 10-year solid waste management plans.

The DMB and 94 open or con-

> "Take action now before the garbage problem becomes unmanageable..."

trolled dumps are "still actively operated" by local governments. At least 81 of them had been issued closure orders.

Controlled dumps

The region has five sanitary landfill facilities (SLFs), two of which are classified as Category 4, enabling those to accommodate the residual wastes of cities or local governments and Limay-Ello-Abat are being developed.

The Category 4 SLFs are in Kalangitan in Capas, Tarlac, and in San Mateo in Nueva Ecija, Bulacan.

Two of the MRFs are in Angeles, one each in Bataan and Zambales, eight in Bulacan, three each in Nueva Ecija and Pampanga and six in Tarlac.

Bulacan has many MRFs, with 131 in the barangays and seven in public markets.

At least MCF persons of garbage generated in the region is composed of biodegradable wastes, about 14 percent is recyclable and the rest are residual and special wastes. Benelle Dwyer, *Inquirer General Luzon*

E10: The green gas gets the green light.

Starting today, February 6, 2009, as mandated by the 2006 Biofuels Law (Republic Act 9367), all oil companies operating in the Philippines commit that at least five percent (5%) bioethanol shall comprise the annual total volume of gasoline which they would sell and distribute.

In line with this commitment, the oil companies are expanding the production and marketing of gasoline with a 10% bioethanol blend (E10) nationwide. The different E10 brands, which all meet the Philippine National Standards (PNS), will benefit cars by enhancing engine efficiency.

The expanded use of E10 will also help the economy by diversifying energy sources and by supporting farmers who produce bioethanol stocks. The environment gains as well due to cleaner car emissions.

According to the Car Manufacturers Association of the Philippines (CAMPI) and the Philippine Automotive Federation, Inc. (PAFI), E10 can be used to power all fuel-injected engines, particularly in vehicles manufactured after 1990. Owners of older-model cars are advised to consult accredited service shops so that they, too, can enjoy the benefits of E10.

Switch to E10 - the green fuel - now!

SWITCH

An Appeal for Fairness

"The evidence did not establish that it was more likely than not that the Respondents [E.C. de Luna Construction (ECDLC) and Eduardo C. de Luna] had engaged in fraudulent practices separate from the collusion xxx or had engaged in corrupt practices."

- WB Decision, January 12, 2009, par. 7

Let the facts speak for themselves.

1. ECDLC is an established and recognized "AAA" contractor and one of the biggest in the roads and bridges sector. As a contractor for over 20 years, it has a track record of 100% project completion efficiency.

2. ECDLC has not bagged any World Bank (WB) project, not even once. It has participated in three biddings, all involving WB-NRIMP-1 packages in 2002-2003, but **won in only one bidding.** Its winning bid was rejected by the WB, even if the DPWH Investigating Committee and highly-reputed consultants subsequently declared the charge of collusion as unlikely.

3. ECDLC was deprived of the contract award without being heard at all. It was not given courtesy by the WB to explain its side. The WB unilaterally rejected the bid results, citing high bid price over the approved budget of the contract (ABC). Yet, **record shows that other WB projects subjected to bidding over the same period bear the same, if not higher, bid prices (over ABC), but earned WB approval without any question.**

4. **ECDLC was not only deprived of the award but ended up being investigated and prosecuted by the WB-INT (anti-corruption unit) for allegedly engaging in fraudulent, corrupt and collusive practices.** The charges relied on anonymous e-mail messages, reckless and unsubstantiated allegations of the existence of a purported cartel controlling the bids in WB projects with ECDLC as the alleged leader having links to top public officials and figures.

5. **The WB-INT charges against ECDLC were not sustained by the WB Sanctions Board. In its Decision, the Board declared that the evidence did not establish that ECDLC and its President had engaged in any fraudulent acts and corrupt practices as charged by the WB-INT.** At the most, the Board merely concluded that it was "more likely than not that ECDLC had engaged in collusive practices."

6. **But even the finding of collusion - including the imputed existence of a cartel controlling the bids in WB projects - is flawed, being anchored on multiple hearsay** *(or one hearsay corroborated by another.)* None of the witnesses against ECDLC gave statements based on **direct or personal knowledge. Unfortunately, such reliance on multiple hearsay evidence is expressly allowed under WB rules of procedure.**

7. **The finding of collusion also suffers from patent defect as only Filipino and Chinese firms were singled out.** Collusion can only succeed if all participating bidders connive to artificially inflate bid prices. Yet, participating Korean, Japanese and other foreign firms - some of them landing second and third in the rejected biddings -- ended up being exonerated from all charges.

8. **ECDLC has filed a statement of protest over the decision of the WB Sanctions Board with a plea for re-evaluation of the WB rules of procedure.** Under existing rules, all the cards are stacked against an accused contractor in WB debarment proceedings:

- No presumption of innocence (the burden of proof is on the accused contractor to prove that it is "not guilty" instead of the other way around);
- No right to confront witnesses;
- No right to demand for the disclosure of the identity of confidential witnesses;
- No right to object to the admissibility of hearsay evidence, even multiple hearsay is admissible and entitled to weight;
- No right to access the records of the case, including submissions of other parties;
- No right to demand for clear or substantial evidence of guilt, the quantum of proof being only "more likely than not" that the accused contractor is guilty of the charges;
- No clear safeguard against prejudgment (top WB officials not restrained from issuing statements of impending debarment even if the case is still pending resolution);
- No institutional checks against potential abuse of the debarment process, the WB being the alleged victim, prosecutor and judge rolled into one;
- No right to appeal, the decision being final and executory;
- No remedy against any miscarriage of justice, the WB claiming full immunity from suit against any error in its decision; and
- No right to demand transparency and accountability, (the WB has even disregarded invitations from Philippine Senate and House of Representatives to shed light on its findings).

9. **ECDLC does not deserve the penalty of permanent disbarment.** In its investigation, WB merely interviewed ECDLC once and for less than an hour and, thereafter, suspended and charged ECDLC with fraudulent, corrupt and collusive practices and recommended for eight years debarment. To dispute the charges, ECDLC was only allowed to file a Response once (with no right to reply), denied of formal hearing, and thereafter, debarred for alleged collusion. Yet, none of the over 30 participating contractors in the NRIMP-1 projects - all subjected to probing questions by the WB-INT-ever declared *based on personal knowledge* of any interference by ECDLC to rig the bidding. Except for collusion, the charges of fraudulent and corrupt practices were not sustained, but ECDLC ended up being slapped with permanent debarment.

10. **ECDLC reiterates its proposal for the WB to follow Philippine procurement laws prescribing bid ceilings** to discourage collusion. And just as the WB requires the highest standard of transparency and accountability on governments and private entities, ECDLC also joins the clamor of progressive groups worldwide for WB to open up its processes and decisions to the same exacting standard. With all due respect, it is high time WB walk its talk.

-LIBRA Law, Counsel, E.C. de Luna Construction

Pagunsan four strokes off Bangkok leader

BANGKOK—JUVIC PAGUNSAN FIRED A FOUR-UNDER PAR 67 THURSDAY to hold defending Mexican thrill by four strokes at the season-opening Asian Tour International at the Singha Golf Club in Thursday. Rookie Mikko Ilonen (6), Mary Pavey and Angelo Que carded 71s and Tony Lascuna had a 72.

Editor Teddyboy S. Molmisa • Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Ochoa

SPORTS

Wizards sink Batang Pier; tie title series

GAME NOTES | Inquirer Sports Areas, Pasay
ALSO—Mallow Cortez vs. Magnolia Forwards

By Cedelff Tapao

A STRONG GAME FROM ROB BARNES more again ground derrière for the Magnolia Purewater Wizards.

Barnes notched 25 points to propel the Wizards to an 84-80 victory over the Barbecue Grand Slam Pier that tied the PBLOG Elite Handicap Cup best-of-five finals series at one game apiece yesterday at the Smart Sports Arena in Pasay City.

Handcuffed by Wizards's strong defense in a 71-66 Magnolia defeat in Game 1, the 6-6 Barnes proved tough to contain in the second game, using on a wide array of post moves and jump shots before completing a crucial three-point play off an inbound pass with 16 seconds left that fueled the Wizards' rout.

"He's a veteran that's why he plays with so much confidence and knows to push," Magnolia coach Jun Banal said of the standout from Utah, who also finished with five rebounds, two steals and three blocks.

"The key here was our defense. We were so worried about their (offense), their quickness. I just hope we can sustain this."

The Wizards pushed to five games by Barnes in the semifinals, won for the first time against the Batang Pier this conference.

"We just tied the series," said Banal.

"It's so big deal."

Despite losing star forward Dylan Andrews, who had to leave the game early in the third period after sustaining a broken nose caused by a hard foul by Peejay Bunsa, the Wizards started pulling away from a tight contest behind Barnes, Peter Galicia and JP Alvarez.

The trio combined for 19 points in the third canto as the Wizards grabbed their biggest lead at 61-52, their first in double figures.

Hodman's leading score Noel Aurillo, whose other in Game 2 was in doubt because PBA Disciplinary Board had ordered him on Feb. 3, failed to convert a triple at the time.

Aurillo (struggled) ends, just 12 points and except for a triple that cut the lead to 71-75 in the final minute, the Gilbarco guard hardly broke loose from Lordan Acquiesdo's defense.

Ronnie Agat the Batang Pier at low with back-to-back jumpers, 72-65, with 3:02 left.

The Batang Pier battled back with Aurillo and Tolentino down burying a triple each that sliced the lead, 76-78, with 1:46 remaining.

Lee's scores five triple from the right quarter court with 27.2 seconds left, before Rosario three-point play sealed it for the Wizards.

Barnes
MAGNOLIA (84)—Barnes 25, Galicia 17, Alvarez 11, Andrews 9, Lanchez 7, Mapalo 7, Acquiesdo 6, Bunsa 5, Agat 3, Lee 0, Ilustre 0, Ilustre 0, Ilustre

James' 52 points lift Cavs past Knicks

NEW YORK—LEBRON JAMES SCORED 52 points to join Michael Jordan as the only visiting players with multiple 50-point games at the perennial Madison Square Garden, leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to a 107-102 win over the New York Knicks in the NBA on Wednesday.

Two nights after Kobe Bryant set a record at the present building with 61 points, James added 11 assists and 10 rebounds to record his 21st career triple-double and become the first player since Kareem Abdul-Jabbar in 1975 to have a triple-double in a 50-point game. James grabbed his final rebound with under 2 seconds left.

The Cavaliers have won four straight.

Mavericks 104, Trail Blazers 99

In Dallas, Josh Howard scored 23 points to lead Dallas over Portland.

Jason Terry added 20 points, while Jason Kidd had 10 assists to move into fourth place on the career assist list, surpassing Oscar Robertson.

Portland slipped 2½ games behind Southwest Division leader Denver.

Lakers 115, Raptors 107

In Toronto, Los Angeles notched its fourth straight win by routing off Toronto.

Kobe Bryant scored 36 points and Vlad Radmanovic added 21 for the Lakers, who teamed up for Thursday's game against the Celtics—their first trip to Boston since losing last season's NBA finals.

The Raptors have lost four straight and 6 since Chris Bosh went off with a sprained right knee in the final quarter.

Pistons 93, Heat 90

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Rodney Stuckey hit two jump shots in the final 90 seconds to get Detroit home against Miami.

Stuckey finished with 18 points for the Pistons.

Bulls 107, Hornets 93

In New Orleans, the hosts slumped to their fourth straight loss, beaten by Chicago.

Derrick Rose scored 21 points, and Ben Gordon had 19 for the Bulls.

New Orleans star Chris Paul missed the game because of a strained right groin. AP

NBA results: Orlando 105, LA Clippers 82; LA Lakers 115, Toronto 107; New Jersey 113, Washington 88; Cleveland 107, New York 102; Detroit 93, Miami 90; Chicago 107, New Orleans 93; Denver 104, Oklahoma City 93; Dallas 104, Portland 86; Golden State 101, Phoenix 97.

JAMES (23) steps up against the Knicks' Nate Robinson. AP

Should we fret if there's no hoops in Laos?

ONE GAME AT A TIME

SEE SAWNDAY

OF ALL THE games and the medals to be won in an international sports meet, we always worry about the basketball competition.

To those unaccustomed to it, this just might be an odd view of sport priorities. Two golds are at stake in basketball, one each in the men's and women's competitions. If you miscount, the viewers are scammed in just two gold medals.

While other countries are concerned about medal-rich sports like athletics, martial arts disciplines like boxing, taekwondo and karate, as well as shooting and swimming, we are worried if there will be basketball at all—like in the Laos SEA Games this year.

The latest report is that Laos cannot accommodate basketball because of logistical and organizational problems.

There was an offer to hold the tournaments outside Laos but that would not really sit well with the fun-time boys.

The most interesting proposal was to hold a basketball seven leap. But even that never really took off.

The organizers wouldn't dare cancel baseball despite its bigger logistical needs. The game is just too popular in the region and not having it in the SEA Games would be a big letdown to those who follow the game passionately.

* * *

If you find our basketball passion odd, then you don't know how much this country cares about the game.

Up to the sport there are of our guys, chewed for in school, played at company or industry leagues and continue to play in weekend groups or in alumni tournaments. Like those of Xavier School, Ateneo and La Salle, even if our legs can no longer obey what the brain wants to do.

We even have a Pusong Pinoy-produced basketball cable channel that could be the only one of its kind in the world outside of NBA TV.

The climate exists because there are those who can't get enough of the game.

* * *

One concern over SEA Games basketball seems facts-in-a-vacuum.

One is from a television perspective that worries that the absence of basketball will not attract viewers to watch the games at all.

The second view is that a SEA Games campaign will not be able to attract stars, even if there's no basketball gold to compete for.

Lastly, how can we check if we are still the best in the region if basketball is not played?

* * *

Maybe, despite our love for the sport, we should get real and accept that there may be times that a basketball competition will not take place in the SEA Games.

There's nothing wrong about reaffirming our basketball superiority in the region every two years, but if hoops is the only sport we approach and support, then we need to evaluate our view of Philippine sports.

If it does finally happen, the absence of basketball unavoidably shifts attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the other sports.

Then no lie it. Let's take a long hard look and check if we are still relevant in the region. If not, disciplines we used to dominate or if we have really lagged or far behind.

A PIVOTING Mac Cardoza of Talk 'N Text tosses his balance after a push by Alaska's Tony dela Cruz in Wednesday's game.

PIVOTAL MATCH

Texters, Aces break 2-2 tie

GAME TODAY: Ginebra Barangay
7 p.m.—Alaska vs Talk 'N Text

By Mycong B. Cuenillo

SLUGGISH, TALK 'N TEXT IS THEE-TIME playing defense and Alaska flu-ose raising its power performance offensive.

With momentum on the side of the Tropang Texters and the Aces pondering what had gone wrong, the SBC-PBA Philippine Cup finalists clash their 2-2 standoff tonight in Game 5 of the best-of-seven duel at ateneo pikeathi.

Game time is 7 p.m. at the Ginebra Barangay over the Texters angling to win a third straight game against an Alaska side hoping to shoot better down the stretch.

Talk 'N Text won the last two games by holding the Aces below 100 points each time.

But Alaska coach Tim Cone changed that during the Texters' last encounter.

"It's 2-2, so it's a best-of-three series now," Cone said Wednesday night after the Aces, who were held scoreless for more than five minutes in the fourth period, took a 96-100 loss. "It doesn't matter if they won two straight, it's still 0-0.

"The effort hasn't been our problem then," the guard-turned-winning coach added, referring to Alaska's horrid 4-of-25 clip from the three-point range, a figure that paled to the Texters' 13-of-27.

History has been kinder to the squad that won Game 5 of a series from 2-2 (2-0).

Since 1990, 20 of the last 23 teams that took a 3-2 lead after a 2-2 deadlock have gone on to win the series. However, two of those three times that has also taking a 3-2 lead were Talk 'N Text upsets.

Alaska was the last team to beat Talk 'N Text from 2-2 down in the 2007 Fiesta Cup Finals, five years after the then Phone Pals also banged the same lead against Red Bull in the Commissioner's Cup championship series.

"It will go down to which team wants it more," Talk 'N Text coach Chot Reyes said. "It has been a battle of attrition. We've gotten it to where we want it by making it a series again.

"Friday (today's Game 5) will be a matter of who has gas left."

Talk 'N Text's offense has not been as sharp as it was early in the tournament. Their 100 Game 4 points were the most the Texters scored against the Aces, a far cry from the high numbers they posted in winning their semifinals against San Miguel Beer.

La Tenorio was practically relieving for Alaska for the second straight night. And while Willie Miller did rise to the challenge with 21 points, Texters fans again struggled.

Meanwhile, the carnival-raising exhibition match between the Smart Gilas-Pilipinas and Barger Xing has been cancelled because of injuries to several national pool members.

Anya paces Southern Ladies with 59

TAMPERED—Eagle on No. 12, plus 4 birdies

CAGAYAN DE ORO—DEFENDING CHAMPIONS Anya Tampinco amassed 59 points from a one-hit score of five-under par 67 built around an eagle and four birdies yesterday to grab the lead at the start of the Southern Ladies Amateur Golf Championship here.

The pacers hitting Tampinco, seeking a second straight championship in the annual event, took a two-point lead over Sonrisa Cipriano under the Modern scoring system.

"I'm playing pretty solid and I feel confident of my chances here," said Tampinco, also the reigning back-to-back national champion who is coming off a joint eighth place finish in the recent The Country Club Invitational.

She virtually snatched the 59 of Tampinco, who bagged the final hole, but the Korean two-time champion from Del Monte now playing for the host club took a two-point penalty for riding in a cart with her father on No. 4.

Apple Rafolin of Del Monte matched par 72, and lay third with 56 points.

Reigning PP Ladies champ Louise Manalo and Cabalo Jacobs both struggled on the slow greens and tallied 53s along with fellows ICTSI lot Sarah Abalos and Del Monte's Eva Mikula.

Lowelyn Colegado and Roberta Lacsina.

Tampinco finished the par-5 No. 12 of the SUBIC-rated Pueblo de Oro Golf and Country Club course off a solid drive and sank the eagle putt from 20 feet.

She earlier made the turn at three under with birdies on Nos. 3, 5 and 7, all inside five feet. A birdie on No. 17 moved her to six-under before bogeying the last after an errant drive.

Cagayan de Oro Mayor Constantino Jaraula, who L. Andrada, PRCGF director and chair of the ladies committee, and club president Rudy Moraca hit the ceremonial drive.

Louise Manalo, looking for her second major victory after annexing the Philippine Ladies Open crown in Southwoods last month, is also in the fold along with buddies national champion Anya Tampinco and Regina de Guzman.

For inquiries, call the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines at 514-7978 or 557-7849 or for no. 8313894 or Cardabong Golf at (088) 5492161.

Spicing up the four-day event put up by WWWExpress chair Joel Feliciano is the staging of the women championship among Guatemala, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines.

ROLANDO Pamarao tops the 2.1K race this last time the Milo Marathon visited Dipolog in 2006

Dipolog, Subic races kick off Milo Marathon Sunday

THE FIRST SIMULTANEOUS ELIMINATION races kicking off the 33rd season of the National Milo Marathon hit the road this Sunday in Dipolog City and in Subic, Zambales.

Some 4,000 runners are expected at the starting line in the tandem Mindanao race, according to land race organizer Virgilio Yu.

The other race inside the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority will have 6,000 runners, said Subic organizer Rolen Paulino.

The champions 21K qualifying run in both legs will promptly raise at 5:30 a.m. with Mayor Roberto Uy firing the starting gun in Dipolog and SBMA administrator Armand C. Arreza flagging off the participants in Subic.

The 5K, 5K and 10K side events may have to 6 a.m. All runners are advised to be at the starting areas not later than 5 a.m. for race bandung and check-in.

The last time the Milo Marathon held a qualifying race in the two-drive was in 2006 with Rolando Pamarao and Marianne Stone topping the Dipolog run and Jessie Ino and Vanessa Dugalan prevailing in Subic.

Aunzo, Ikeda head DHL field; listing ends today

REIGNING NATIONAL CHAMPION Perlie Aunzo, Ronel PP Marwan winner Anthony Fernando and reigning ladies titlist Cristina Ikeda head the holders in the WWWExpress DHL National Interzone Golf Championships on Feb. 10 at Wack Wack.

Registration for the tournament ends today with more entries expected to make the starting roster.

Others seeing action are Jhoson Abalos, Mark Fernando and Jessie Balanban, who are expected to slug it out for top honors with the winners of the ICTSI golf stable that includes Rufino Bayona and Arnaldo Aunzo.

Louise Manalo, looking for her second major victory after annexing the Philippine Ladies Open crown in Southwoods last month, is also in the fold along with buddies national champion Anya Tampinco and Regina de Guzman.

For inquiries, call the Women's Golf Association of the Philippines at 514-7978 or 557-7849 or for no. 8313894 or Cardabong Golf at (088) 5492161.

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Hosoi-Lacson tops Yulo golf

DALUBHANG LAGUNA—MASAHIRO HOSOI AND CHERRY ANN LACSON posted 150 points to retain the overall championship in the second 36-hole Jose Yulo Memorial Tournament at the Canlubang Golf and Country Club.

The Filipino-Japanese bantam smacked an 82 in the first round and a 74 in the second under the Pfd. (Stableford) scoring format to rule the annual member-guest tournament.

Former World amateur campaigner Cesar Hernandez and Jose Ramos raked the Senior golf division with a 158 tally after rounds of 198 and 142.

Atty Cesar topped Tommy Manotoc for the individual net gross trophy on rounds of 77-72 for 144. Manotoc finished a stroke back on rounds of 78-74.

Ben Tabo and Dennis Reyes took low net honors with 81 and 82, respectively.

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DID YOU KNOW

TODAY is the eighth death anniversary of labor leader Filemon "Popoy" Lagman, who was killed by gunmen in front of the Bahay ng Alumni building on the University of the Philippines campus in Diliman, Quezon City. *Cyril L. Bonabela Inquirer Research*

MMDA vows: Attack won't scare, stop us

Drive vs illegal vendors to go on

By Allison W. Lopez

OFFICIALS OF THE Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday closed ranks behind sidewalk-clearing operations chief Roberto Engaland said they would not be cowed in their campaign to clear all sidewalks and roads in the metropolis of obstructions and illegal vendors.

In a statement, the agency's directors, deputy directors, department heads and middle managers described the clearing operations as "inspired" and "totally successful" and "totally successful place in a civilized society."

"Violence has no place in a society that is founded by respect for human rights, fear of God, and rule of law. We deplore, in the strongest possible terms, this cowardly act and we are hoping that the perpetrators will be just behind bars," they said.

"So despicable and senseless this violent attack on innocent human lives can be, we will never be cowed into doing our jobs and fulfilling our mandate under the

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1 killed, 1 hurt in car crash in Manila

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A CHINESE MAN WAS KILLED while his passenger was injured when the car they were riding in slammed into a center island on Roxas Boulevard before dawn yesterday.

Chen Huabing, 28, died on the spot due to massive head injuries while Victoria Tu remained confined at the Dagupan Doctors Hospital in Pangasinan, suffering from a fractured left leg and minor injuries.

Reports from the Manila Police District's Traffic Enforcement Unit showed that the accident happened at around 3 a.m. yesterday on the southbound lane of Roxas Boulevard near the corner of Quirino Avenue in Malate.

Witnesses told investigators that they saw a Toyota Vios sedan speeding before the wheel racing with a Toyota Fortuner.

The car, however, crashed into the road's center island before flipping over. It skidded on the road before coming to a stop some 30 meters away.

The driver of the Fortuner, witnesses said, did not stop. No one was able to get a look at the sport utility vehicle's plate number.

A CHINESE man was killed while his companion was hurt when their car careened out of control before flipping over on Roxas Boulevard. Witnesses said the car driver was racing with another vehicle. PHILSTAR PHOTO

Coffee shop in QC mall loses P10,000 to robbers

By Julie M. Aurelio

A COFFEE STAND INSIDE A MALL in Quezon City lost its earnings of more than P10,000 over the weekend after thugs in mask chase days before the robbery was reported to the police.

Chief Insp. Enrico Figueroa, head of the Quezon City Police District's theft and robbery section, said they were monitoring who the assailants used to head of security failed to report the incident immediately.

"That could be negligence on the part of the security, plus they also failed to preserve the crime scene. That is not normal," Figueroa said.

On Monday morning, employees of The Coffee Experience Shop at SM North Edsa were surprised when they came to work and found their stand in disarray.

Shop owners Josephine Tolibaso and Angelica Salita told the police that one of their baristas, Ronald Quilloque, reported that someone had emptied the cash box which contained P10,000.

The police, however, found Quilloque's other actions suspicious, saying that "instead of preserving the crime scene, [he] cleaned up and opened the coffee shop before reporting it to the duty security guard."

In addition, Quilloque and the establishment's security guards fled by their supervisor, Zaldy Alaney, did not report the burglary to the police until Wednesday.

Figueroa said scenes-in-the-making. Bernard Dhan inspected the area and reported that the theft may have occurred between 10 p.m. of Feb. 1 and 9 a.m. the following day.

"The unidentified suspects easily gained entry inside the coffee shop because [the stand] was only covered with a net which leaned to several malls inside the mall at [closing time]," police said.

Figueroa told the barista that they have invited some of the coffee shop's employees for questioning.

Supreme Court of the Philippines
Judicial and Bar Council
Manila

ANNOUNCEMENT

Conformably with Section 1, Rule 7 of the Rules of the Judicial and Bar Council (JBC-009), as amended, the JBC will conduct a public interview at the Session Hearing Room, Ground floor, New Supreme Court Building on the following candidates for the position of **ASSOCIATE JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT** vice **Hon. Adolfo S. Azcuna**, who will compulsorily retire on 10 February 2009:

23 February 2009 (Wednesday)

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon
1. ABAD, ROBERTO A.
2. ABDULWAHID, HAKIM S.

2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.
1. ACOSTA, ERNESTO D.
2. BERSAMIN, LUCAS P.

24 February 2009 (Thursday)

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
1. DIMAAMPAO, JAPAR B.
2. DIMAISIP, PABLITO, SR. V.

2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
1. TELEBTINO, AMELITA DE GUZMAN

The following are also candidates for the said position but were already interviewed in November and December 2008:

1. BUÑAG, JOSE MARIO C.
2. DEVANADERA, AGNES VIZENTA TORRES
3. ENRIQUEZ, JUAN (R) Q.
4. FERNANDO, REMEDIOS A. SALAZAR
5. HORMACHUELOS, PORFIA MUÑOZ
6. REYES, ANDRES (R) B.
7. ROBLES, RODOLFO E.
8. SANDOVAL, EULOGIO G.
9. VILLANUEVA, CESAR L.
10. VILLARUMA, MARTIN (R) S.
11. VILLAREAL, FRANCISCO (R) H.

The JBC also announces that the following are applicants for judgeship positions:

REGIONAL TRIAL COURT (RTC): (REGION I) ILOCOS SUR: (2) (3 & 21) ABBAGS, Robert C. **ANTE**, Francisco Jr. A.; **ARCHOG**, Cecilia Corazon D.; **CACHAPERO**, Oliver A.; **CORPUZ**, Ferdinand M.; **DOJILLO**, Jaime, Jr. L.; **FELIPE**, Rebecca M.; **GASCON**, Jeannette S.; **JURADO**, Alessandro D.; **LACASANDILE**, Reynaldo A.; **LUYUN**, Candalaria A.; **MANTUHAC**, Antonina C.; **TUMAMENG**, Clifford Domingo Eusebio L.; **VIVERS**, Kevin Rents G.; **SAN FERNANDO, LA UNION (Bra. 34 & 37) MENESES**, Marino S.; **(REGION III) PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, PALAWAN: (8-12) ARCAYAN**, Angelo R.; **BAGUPO**, Leah C.; **SELLUSA**, Amy Rivera D.; **BENAVIDEZ**, Pastor J.; **CABILAO**, Bernardino T.; **CAPETANGA**, Raul Bernardo M.; **DALDERA**, Hermogenes E.; **GARONG**, Rauh M.; **GUTIERREZ**, Jose G.; **MONSOD**, Rogelio A.; **PAMA**, Ric M.; **SOCRATES**, Ma. Rowena P.; **URBI**, Emi C. **(REGION VII) CEBU CITY: (Brs.10 & 16) AGUSTIN**, Rey Lawrence D.; **ALTUBAR**, Rubin F.; **ANDRINO**, Oscar D.; **BALOGBAT**, Maria Ellengild L.; **BARRAS**, Eduardo D.; **CAMIS**, Rollo P.; **CAÑEDA**, Antonio G.; **CLAVE**, Hilda S.; **DACUNDOS**, Joshua N.; **DANOY**, Eliseo A.; **DINOY**, Tolentino A.; **DONDOYANO**, Jose Rene G.; **ENJAMERE**, Lucila E.; **ESCOTO**, Gina C.; **ESTORNINOS**, Florlee M.; **GALAMIDA**, Teresita A.; **GERSOMO**, Pastalenio M.; **GERONA**, Rolando F.; **GESTOPA**, Gerardo Jr. S.; **GO**, Glenda C.; **GOLEZ**, Rodolfo P.; **HIMALALOAN**, James Stewart E.; **INHAY**, Jose Beatrice L.; **JACA**, Donato J.; **JIMENEZ**, Bernardo Jr. S.; **JURADO**, Alessandro D.; **KINTANAR**, Ronaldo T.; **LABITAG**, Rolando T.; **MACALAM**, Alex I.; **MALAZARTE**, Samuel S.; **MANAYON**, Mario V.; **MANTILLA**, Fernando G.; **MARQUEZ**, Gregorio V.; **MONTERO**, Hermes B.; **NAVARRO**, Wilfredo F.; **ONG**, Rachel F.; **ORATE**, Manuel C.; **OYADER**, Eusebio I.; **PALALAY**, Joshua R.; **PANDOY**, Federico V.; **PO**, Jocelyn G.; **REDALLA**, Omar S.; **ROSALES**, Edgardo C.; **RUBIA**, Marshall L.; **SANCHEZ**, Nida A.; **SENO**, Macario V.; **SENTILLAS**, Wilfredo M.; **SEVILLE**, Francisco Jr. A.; **YU**, Sandrone D. **(REGION VIII) TACLOBAN CITY, LEYTE: (Br.8) BASANCO**, Miguel T.; **BURALES**, Virgilio A.; **CAING**, Judy P.; **CAMPOMANES**, Myrtle R.; **CAÑA**, Percival S.; **DETRETA**, Perla M.; **ESTEBREDO**, Flavia M.; **SLOTOM**, Manuel A.; **ROMERES**, Roland N.; **SUAYTE**, Rafael M.; **(OBSOLO**, Rogelio R.; **MANTILLA**, Fernando G.; **MOLON**, Register A.; **ORATE**, Marciano C.; **POTILLA**, Edgar P.; **QUANT**, Merry D.; **RAMIREZ**, Virgilio L.; **SERRANO**, Agrimino C.; **TABIAO**, Leo C.; **UMIL**, Cirilo A. **(REGION IX) DAVAO CITY, DAVAO DEL SUR: (Br.12) ALCONERA**, Virgilio P.; **APOLLON**, Demosthenes R.; **CABREROS**, Socorro C.; **DAYANGHIRANG**, Melinda A.; **DE LA RAMA**, Eli A.; **DESPARINE**, Rolando V.; **FERRARIS**, Rufino Jr. S.; **FULGAR**, Jose Jerry L.; **JAVIER**, Peter John U.; **LABITAG**, Rolando T.; **MACALAM**, Alex I.; **MANDALUPE**, Alberto M.; **MARCOS**, Bella Angel C.; **MASORONG**, Edgar A.; **MONFORT**, Agnes A.; **PRAT**, Ma. Cynthia A.; **QUANT**, Merlo D.; **RESTAURO**, Efraim C.; **SEPULVEDA**, Victor C.; **SUELO**, Herminio V.; **VILLAFUERTE**, Fortunato Jr. G.; **SENIDO**, Dan D.; **ZAMORA**, Juan B.

MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT IN CITIES (MTCC): (REGION IV) LUCENA CITY: (5) LA CRUZ, Rene M.; **(REGION VII) CEBU CITY: (Br.6) ALCALA**, Carlo Martin R.; **BARING-UP**, Ferdinand A.; **BOREALSA**, Conor F.; **CALSEBON**, Luis H. F.; **DENTINO**, Perla G.; **DACUMOS**, Joshua N.; **DEGORIA**, Daphne A.; **ESTRADA**, Ariel Jose R.; **IPONG**, Liana S.; **RIVA**, Jose Rolando L.; **KINTANAR**, Rosario T.; **ORATE**, Marciano C.; **PAGATPAT**, Rosemarie S.; **QUIJANO**, Dianna R.; **RABILLAS**, Loana L.; **SANCHEZ**, Nida A.; **TAGAAN**, Jesus Rodrigo T.; **VIDALLEZ**, Emergildo N.; **YGNACIO**, Joseph Stephen A.; **(REGION XI) DAVAO CITY: JANGANLAG**, Jill Rose S.

The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the said candidates for judicial positions in the Supreme Court and lower courts **not later than 10 FEBRUARY 2009 (Monday)** to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr. Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel. No. 552-9512; Fax No.552-9507; e-mail address: jbc_supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph or jbc@jbc.judiciary.gov.ph).

Likewise, the JBC announces the opening for application or recommendation of the positions of (1) **PRESIDING JUSTICE OF THE SANDIGANBAYAN** vice **Hon. Diosdado M. Peralta** who was appointed Associate Justice of the Supreme Court on 23 January 2009; and (2) **SIXTH JUSTICE OF THE COURT OF APPEALS** vice **Hon. Edgardo F. Sundiam**, who passed away on 01 February 2009. Applications or recommendations must be submitted **not later than 10 FEBRUARY 2009 (Monday)** to the JBC Secretariat.

All applicants for judicial positions must submit to the JBC ASAP via fax, mail or e-mail their updated JBC Form 1 (Revised September 2007) proof of Filipino citizenship, and 2009 Ombudsman, NBI and Police Clearances, as well as the other requirements before the date scheduled for their interview. **Those who fail to submit the necessary requirements shall neither be interviewed nor considered for nomination.**

05 February 2009

MA. LOURDES D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court & JBC
Ex-Officio Secretary

Curfew prompts Valenzuela kids to be home by 11 p.m.

By Beverly T. Hackbridal

FROM 11 PM TO 4 A.M. EVERY day the streets of Valenzuela City are off-limits to teenagers.

This was after a curfew ordinance was imposed in the area late last year, an official recently told the Inquirer.

Ugat ng mga Barangay president and Councilor Alvin Feliciano said that since then, the number of teenagers roaming the city's streets after 11 p.m. has gone down by 90 percent.

He added that those who were caught violating the curfew said that they were not aware of the ordinance which was passed last year.

Under City Ordinance No. 13, children aged 17 and below are not allowed on the streets from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m.

Feliciano said the city council decided to pass the ordinance to protect young children against lawlessness and violence.

Violators are held overnight in barangay centers and turned over to their parents the following day for a form of protection, they are not handcuffed and cannot be detained for more than eight hours.

The ordinance states that parents are responsible for keeping their children off the streets during the prohibited hours.

Should they be found to be negligent, they could be admonished by the Department of Social Welfare and Development or the Council's for the Protection of Children.

In addition, they could be fined between P200 and P500. Should they be unable to pay the fine, they will be asked to perform community service for five days.

So far, Feliciano said, students and parents have been supportive of the city-wide curfew.

OUTREACH PROGRAM
The Philippine-Chinese Charitable Association Inc., owner and operator of the Chinese General Hospital and Medical Center, along with the Filipino-Chinese Greens/Chamber of Commerce Inc. and Philippine National Red Cross recently conducted a medical and dental civic action mission in Barangay Balicanan, Magalang, Pampanga. The outreach program was a joint undertaking of the Rotary Club of Magalang, Pampanga in cooperation with Dr. James G. Dy, PCCM chair and president.

METROBRIEFS

Student robbed

A STUDENT lost close to P200,000 worth of electronic gadgets and jewelry to burglars who ransacked her apartment in Manila the other day. Dianne Kristchen Baguia, 21, a graduating student of the University of Santo Tomas, said that thieves broke into her apartment on Don Quijote Street in Sampaloc and took a laptop computer worth P60,000, two mobile phones and several pieces of jewelry. The burglary reportedly happened at around 2:30 p.m. Wednesday after she left the apartment to attend her classes.
Jeannette I. Andrade

Tricycle driver killed

A TEN-WHEEL truck lost its brakes and plowed into several vehicles, killing a tricycle driver and wounding the passengers, including another motorist in Manila Wednesday. The victim was identified as Hector Velasquez, 46, of Cristobal Street in Pasay. His companions, Erwene Bonde and her son Nicolas, were taken to the Manila Doctors Hospital for treatment. The driver of the truck, Ismael Nita, 28, said that he was driving on Cristobal Street in Pasay when he lost control of the truck and slammed into several vehicles, including Velasquez's tricycle. Police immediately apprehended Nita. He resided in Tarlac.
Jeannette I. Andrade

Travel Expo on Feb. 6-8

SUAVE is offering its Manila-Boracay-Manila Buy 1, Take 2 promo and Manila-Batanes-Manila Buy 1, Take 1 promo when travelers can avail of fare only P1,999 (dtrs. Taxes). The promo will be booked only at the 16th Travel Tour Expo from Feb. 6 to 8 at the SMX Manila, SMX Convention Center, Mall of Asia, Pasay City. For more information, call SUAVE at 8-850-000 or book online at www.flysuave.com.

Alumni homecoming

THE 6479 annual grand Alumni homecoming of Antonio High School will be held today at Palacio de Maynila at 1888 M.H. del Pilar Street near Roxas Boulevard. For details, please call Lita Barano-Trevidad at 8538888, Ate Rose at Zalia, 84 391 20, Elsie Concepcion, 8902483, Sir. Ramon Cabrera, 7920-8236761, Thelma Cortes-Manalo, 8312481 and Hedie Andres-Bautista at 8388830.

MMDA ...

From page A11

able leadership and guidance of [MMDA Chair] Bayani Fernando," they added.

Bagatsol's son, Mico, 34, was seriously hurt while his sisters, Johnny Agbay died instantly when the vehicle they were traveling in overturned after it was rammed from behind by the speeding MMDA truck.

The elder Bagatsol earlier said a settlement which provides prosecution for a fine of P5-P10 thousand was probably behind the attack.

Forensic science found wanting in America's crime labs

FORENSIC EVIDENCE THAT has helped convict thousands of defendants for nearly a century is often the product of shoddy scientific practices that should be suspended and standardized, according to accounts of a draft report by America's preeminent scientific research group.

The report by the National Academy of Sciences is to be released this month. People who have seen it say it is a sweeping critique of many forensic methods that the police and prosecutors rely on, including fingerprinting, firearms identification and analysis of bite marks, blood spatter, hair and handwriting.

The report says such analyses are often handled by poorly trained technicians who then exaggerate the accuracy of their methods in court. It concludes that Congress should create a federal agency to guarantee the independence of the field, which has been dominated by law enforcement agencies, say forensic professionals, scholars and scientists who have seen or view copies of the study. Early reviewers said the report was still subject to change.

The result of a two-year review, the report follows a series of widely publicized crime laboratory failures, including the case of Brandon Mayfield, a lawyer from Portland, Ore., and Muslim convert who was wrongly arrested in the 2004 terrorist train bombing in Madrid.

American examiners matched Mayfield's fingerprint to those found at the scene, although Spanish authorities eventually convicted the FBI that its fingerprint identification methods were faulty. Mayfield was released, and the federal government settled with him for $2 million.

In 2005, Congress asked the National Academy to assess the state of the forensic techniques used in court proceedings. The report's findings are not binding, but they are expected to be influential.

"This is not a judicial ruling; it is not a law," said Michael J. Saks, a psychology and law professor at Arizona State University who presented fundamental weaknesses in forensic evidence in the academy. "But it will be used by others who will make law or will argue cases."

Legal experts expect that the report will give ammunition to defense lawyers seeking to discredit forensic procedures and expert witnesses in court. Lawyers would also use the findings in their attempts to overturn convictions based on questionable evidence.

NYT

THE UKRAINIAN cargo ship MV Faina in photo taken on Sept. 29, 2008. Somali pirates have released the arms-laden ship they hijacked in late September, according to reports. AP

Somali pirates free Ukraine arms ship

NAIROBI, KENYA—SOMALI PIRATES ON Thursday began leaving a Ukrainian ship laden with tanks and other weapons after receiving a ransom, one of the pirates said.

The US Navy said it appeared the ransom was dropped on Wednesday.

Fourteen gunmen and the pirates' commander disembarked from the MV Faina, which has been held by the pirates for five months, said Adan Abdi Omar, one of those who left the ship. Omar spoke to The Associated Press by satellite phone from the central Somali coastal town of Harardheere, near to where the MV Faina is anchored.

"We have all indications that a ransom was paid regarding Faina," Lt. Nathan Christensen, a spokesperson for Bahrain-based 5th Fleet said on Thursday.

Christensen said US Navy ships, monitoring the Ukrainian arms ship, "saw something that could be a ransom, dropped on the ship on Wednesday."

Christensen did not want to elaborate, but added that US ships continue to watch the Faina.

Omar said two boats have been sent to collect more than two dozen other pirates still on board. He said he would give more details later.

Mount earlier Mikhail Voitenko, a spokesperson for the ship's owner, said the pirates had received a ransom on Wednesday. He did not say how much was paid, but Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency put it at $3.2 million. The pirates originally demanded $20 million.

The MV Faina carrying a cargo of tanks, other weaponry and about 20 mostly Ukrainian crew members was seized by bandits in September off the Somali coast. Ships of the US Navy's 5th Fleet have surrounded it on the water the cargo closer not get into the hands of Somali insurgent groups linked to al-Qaida.

"The ransom has been delivered to the Faina. The owners of the ship so far don't want to comment on this, but I'm getting information on this just about every half-hour," Voitenko said in comments on Russian TV on Wednesday.

AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Kyrgyzstan starts moves to close US base

BISHKEK—Kyrgyzstan's government asked parliament on Wednesday to approve the closure of a US military air base which supplies US-led troops fighting in Afghanistan. The decision by the Central Asian state, a former Soviet republic and a traditional Russian ally, sets a tough challenge for new US President Barack Obama as he plans to send additional troops to Afghanistan. But Moscow said it would be flexible in US requests to transit supplies across Russia. It gave no details. The Manas base is an important staging point for the US-led military campaign against the Taliban and terrorists from across Washington seeks to reinforce supply routes that bypass Pakistan, where supply convoys face security risks.

Reuters

Iraq probing serious vote fraud allegations

BAGHDAD—Electoral officials are examining serious complaints of vote fraud in Iraq's western Anbar province, where Sunni Arab tribal leaders are disputing provincial election results. The independent electoral commission has received a flood of complaints about fraud and other violations from the largely Sunni Arab province, Faraj al-Haidari, Iraq's senior electoral official, said on Wednesday. Saturday's provincial election was the most peaceful in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003. But Anbar has seen tensions between Sunni Arab tribes participating for the first time and established parties that ran the province for years. "Some of these complaints are serious and could be considered 'real' complaints. We may send our officials to verify these complaints on the ground," Haidari said. "Fraud" is the term for complaints which could alter the outcome of the vote, which was held to select leaders in 14 out of Iraq's 18 provinces.

Reuters

Japanese dies after rejection by 14 hospitals

TOKYO—After getting stuck by emergency, an elderly Japanese man with breathing problems waited in an ambulance as paramedics phoned 14 hospitals, each refusing to treat him. He died 90 minutes later at the facility that finally relented—one of thousands of victims repeatedly turned away over the past year by understaffed and overcrowded hospitals in Japan. Paramedics reached the accident scene within minutes after the man and a female colleague suffered multiple injuries in the same body of injury. But 14 hospitals refused to admit the 66-year-old citing a lack of specialists, equipment and staff, according to Mitsuhiro Seotoda, a fire department official.

AP

Bangladesh crowns champion rat killer

DHAKA—A poor farmer from northern Bangladesh was crowned the country's rat killing champion on Thursday with a final score of 10,500 dead rodents after a yearlong hunt. Abdus Rahim Mandal, 45, used traps, poison and flooding to kill his quarry, and collected their tails to prove his success. Mandal claims 14-inch color TV as a prize from the government. The nationwide drive to preserve food supplies has logged 75 million rats, say government officials.

AP

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The WORLD

Editor Lamberto B. Quiroz

Pope orders Holocaust denier to recant

ROME—RESPONDING TO AN EXTRAORDINARY burst of global outrage, especially in Pope Benedict XVI's native Germany, the Vatican for the first time on Wednesday called on a recently rehabilitated bishop to take back his statements denying the Holocaust.

Late last month, the Pope revoked the excommunication of four schismatic bishops from the ultraconservative Society of St. Pius X, including Bishop Richard Williamson, a Briton, who in an interview broadcast last month denied the existence of the Nazi gas chambers.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Vatican Secretariat of State said that Williamson "must absolutely, unequivocally and publicly distance himself from his positions on the Shoah," or Holocaust, or else he would not be allowed to serve as a bishop in the Roman Catholic Church.

The statement said that the bishop's recent statements denying the Holocaust had been "unknown to the Holy Father at the time he revoked the excommunication."

Efforts to reach Williamson were unsuccessful, and he issued no public response. The bishop has a history of public statements denying the Holocaust.

Outside Jerusalem's Western Bethany Guesthouse, the bishop's favorite seminary with its own bistro in La Reja, Argentina, a small town near Buenos Aires, a priest who came to the door said that Williamson would not comment until he had spoken with his superiors.

Pope Benedict has stumbled before in his nearly four-year papacy, most notably when he offended Muslims in 2006 by citing a medieval scholar who said Islam brought things "evil and inhuman." But the renewed controversy created by Williamson's rehabilitation is unlike anything the Vatican has faced in recent decades.

Wednesday's unsigned statement—a rare case of the Vatican's diplomatic arm forthrowing earlier remarks by the Pope himself—was only released on the ago-old battleground grappling with the 24-hour news cycle. It also seemed to be a stern indication that the Vatican was facing nothing less than an internal and reformation crisis.

The day before, in a rare criticism from the head of a government, Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany called on the Pope to clarify his position on the Holocaust, saying his previous remarks had not been sufficient.

Several prominent figures in the German Catholic Church joined in the criticism, and the 10-Conference of Catholic Bishops also issued a statement condemning Williamson.

But the statement from the Vatican Secretariat of State seemed to go a long way toward calming the uproar. The chair of the German Bishops' Conference, Archbishop Robert Zollitsch, praised it, saying on Wednesday that the Holocaust had "clarified in an unequivocal way that every form of anti-Semitism should be condemned." AFP

WILLIAMSON AP

Deadly medicine found in 2 more China provinces

BEIJING—A DIABETES DRUG LINKED TO 302 deaths in lax western China has been found on store shelves in two other provinces, though no new illnesses have been reported, state media said on Thursday.

The medicine, called "Ling Zhi Ning Jiao Nang," contained six times the normal amount of a chemical ingredient used to lower blood sugar, and it believed to have been distributed in many places across the country, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

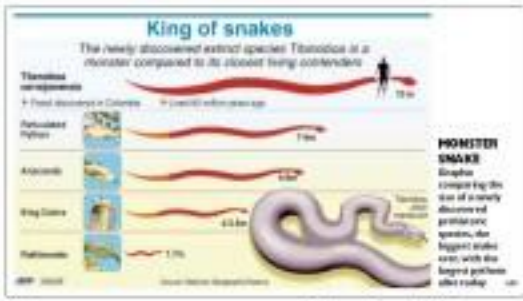
The new highlights China's shoddy record in food and drug safety in the most recent scandal to rock the country, at least six babies died and nearly 300,000 were sickened by infant formula contaminated with an industrial chemical that can cause kidney stones and kidney failure.

Xinhua said authorities have ordered the arrest of the main suspect involved in the sale of the drug, Lizhong, a resident of the northeastern China's Liaoning province. Li is still at large.

Investigators found 1,600 bottles in warehouses in China's Qinghai province, and 215 bottles in southwestern Sichuan province, according to China National Radio and government website china.com.cn. Most of the medicine has been recovered by authorities.

The diabetes drug killed five people in the far western Qinghai capital last month and sent nine others to the hospital.

Authorities found 16,000 bottles of the medicine and arrested five suspects in Qinghai, Xinhua said. Only nine were found selling the drug from a normal house, where he gave free lectures and performed blood sugar tests. AP



Obama caps exec pay in bailout firms

WASHINGTON—IN ANNOUNCING new executive pay limits on Wednesday, President Barack Obama is trying to hold the financial industry accountable to taxpayers while easing to change an entrenched corporate culture that embraces market bonanzas and perks that often bear little relationship to corporate performance.

Obama also needs to deflect a growing populist outrage over the multibillion-dollar bonuses and other perks companies earn on the public dole. His announcement comes just days before the administration is expected to unveil a new strategy—and possibly request more money—to guarantee or buy outright hundreds of billions of dollars in bad assets held by banks.

The new rules would set a $500,000 cap on cash compensation for the most senior executives, curtail severance pay when top executives leave a company, restrict cashing in on stock incentives until government assistance is repaid and put corporate boards in charge of setting future perquisites.

The plan's effectiveness in curbing executive pay may not be known for years, however. But administration officials have also been criticized for not going far enough and encouraging boards to find ingenious ways around limits, often hiring consultants to create new forms of compensation.

Even the new rules allow companies some leeway. While curtailing others stock incentives can be cashed in, they don't place limits on the amount of stock options, which are typically the biggest part of many executive compensation packages. In addition, the toughest new rules apply only to large companies seeking government assistance in the future. They do not apply to the more than 350 institutions that have already received bailout funds, but only to those that seek aid under the next phase of the bailout program. And companies that seek aid but do not need exceptional government assistance can repay the $500,000 cap and "that is a donation," Obama said on Wednesday. "We don't discourage wealth. We don't begrudge anybody for achieving success. And we believe that success should be rewarded. But when gets people upset—and rightfully so—is when executives get rich while at the same time being rewarded by taxpayers who have essentially been thrust executives are subsidized by US taxpayers." AFP

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ERRATUM

In the Balance Sheet and Consolidated Balance Sheet of the Land Bank of the Philippines as of December 31, 2008 published in the Philippine Daily Inquirer last February 2, 2009 due to reclassification in Contingent Accounts. Trust Assets, Liabilities & Capital remain the same:

Balance Sheet (Head Office and Branches)	From	Should Read As
Spot Foreign Exchange Contracts	P 12,972,980,000.00	P 1,000,280,000.00
Derivatives	19,499,166,980.78	32,525,866,980.78
Consolidated Balance Sheet (Banks and Financial Subsidiaries)	**From**	**Should Read As**
Spot Foreign Exchange Contracts	P 12,972,980,000.00	P 1,000,280,000.00
Derivatives	19,499,166,980.78	32,525,866,980.78

President GMA visits Hamilo Coast

President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who is at the groundbreaking of the Temple Nanuglo Highland last January 23, paid a quick visit to Hamilo Coast where she joined 200 Investment Corporation executives for breakfast and a leisurely afternoon around the area's super Pico de Loro beach club. Hamilo Coast is a development of Ayala Land Inc., a subsidiary of SM Investments Corporation. Hamilo Coast is among only two properties in the Philippines that could be an integrated resort of seaside resort communities that includes recreation with residential and commercial use. Some of its resort features include around 10 kilometers of coastline and intercept views of the South China Sea. Shown in the photo are President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (with backfisher) is welcomed by Hamilo Coast Vice President and Chief Development Officer of SM Prime Holdings Inc. Jojo Sy (left) and SM Investments Corporation's Senior Vice President Elizabeth Sy and Ayala Land Inc. Senior Vice President Antonio Jose Zalamea.

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HK tycoons lose more than half their riches

HONG KONG—Hong Kong's 40 richest men have lost over half their combined wealth in the global economic meltdown taken its toll on the capitalist haven's free-wheeling billionaires, but tycoon Li Ka-shing still holds the top spot.

Li, dubbed "Superman," saw almost half his wealth subdued away to leave him with $18.2 billion, Forbes Magazine says in its "Hong Kong's 40 richest" list for 2009.

The head of Cheung Kong Holdings and Hutchison Whampoa, 81, who fled Japanese-occupied China in 1940, built a plastic flower business into a diversified global business empire.

The fortunes of Hong Kong's top 40 richest plunged from $179 billion a year ago to $82 billion, according to Forbes. Reuters

Editor Raul G. Manuela ■ Assistant Editor Carrie S. Martona

BUSINESS

Inflation hits 10-month low in January at 7.1%

IN THIS ISSUE

PSALM to rebid 100-MW Agusan facility /B6

Stocks jump 2.4%

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 2.4-PERCENT higher yesterday due to favorable news on inflation and positive sentiment on key stocks, dealers said.

The composite index gained 49.62 points to 1,502.07 points, while the all-shares index gained 0.8 percent to 1,229.67 points.

There were 60 gainers, 22 losers and 63 unchanged.

Volume totaled 777.8 million shares worth P1.71 billion.

The announcement earlier that the inflation rate fell to a 10-month low of 7.1 percent in January helped lift the index, said Ilan Rodrigo of Daiwa Securities.

"This was at the lower end of the government projection," he said.

There was also interest in key blue-chips, he said, adding "investors realized that given the strong fundamentals of these companies, they should have executed look at Philippine stocks."

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. gained 3.6 percent to P2,220 while Manila Water Co. rose 7.14 percent to P11.25.

Manila Electric Co. rose 3.97 percent to P65.50.

San Miguel Corp. saw its "A" shares remain unchanged at P40 while its "B" shares fell 1.2 percent to P40.50. AFP

Bangko Sentral sees room for new rate cut

By Reuend M. Dumlao and Michelle V. Ramos

INFLATION CONTINUED TO SLOW DOWN IN January, with consumer prices increasing an average 7.1 percent year-on-year due to sustained declines in the cost of fuel, electricity and water.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that rose in January—which factors out volatile prices of selected food and energy items—stood at 6.9 percent in January, down from 7.3 percent in December.

The inflation rate for January also went down from the previous month's 8 percent, continuing a trend that has stretched to five months so far.

The rate of increase in consumer prices has been going down month after month since last year's peak of 12.5 percent in August.

The January inflation rate was the lowest in 10 months or since the 6.3 percent in April 2008.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said there were less bidirectional for it to further ease monetary policy in the months ahead and support economic pump-priming initiatives after the annual inflation was contained to slide in January.

"This confirms our expectation, for a continued slowdown in price increases and gives the BSP more room to support the economy and ensure that there is sufficient liquidity for the efficient working of the financial markets," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said.

In the opening of its Monetary Board last Jan. 29, the BSP slashed its key policy rates by another 50 basis points. The central bank's overnight borrowing and lending rates now stand at 5 and 7 percent, respectively.

INFLATION /B1

SMC unit's bonds get triple-A rating

By Doris C. Dumlao

LOCAL CREDIT RATINGS Philippine Rating Services Corp. (Philratings) has given its highest rating of "PRS Aaa" on San Miguel Brewery Inc.'s maiden peso-denominated bond offer of up to P20 billion.

"Obligations rated PRS Aaa are of the highest quality with minimal credit risk. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitments on the obligations is extremely strong," Philratings said in a statement yesterday.

SMB's proposed bond issue will be paid in three tranches: five and ten years. Proceeds from the bond issue will be used to buy P9B billion worth of land, four brands and other intellectual property rights from parent San Miguel Corp.

San Miguel's flagship beer brewery will offer a combination of peso and dollar bonds to raise the money needed to pay the parent company within this quarter.

Philratings said the rating "reflected SMB's market leader positions, experienced management and production team, as well as continued positive although moderated growth for the beer industry amid economic prospects and conditions."

"The rating also takes into account the sustainable improve- SMC /B3

Car assemblers seek tax relief

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CHAMBER OF AUTOMOTIVE Manufacturers of the Philippines Inc. (Camapi) is seeking help from the government to help ensure that the industry stays healthy amid the global recession.

Camapi president Elizabeth Lee said last week assures that the group proposed was the possibility of reviewing the imposition of excise taxes to bring the cost of doing business down.

"Maybe we can do something with the excise taxes because those are pretty hefty. For the first 600,000 units, it's at 2 percent, 12 percent up to 1.2 million, and 20 percent thereafter. We haven't gone to the details yet of what can be done in the current tax structure. We've just started discussions," she told reporters yesterday.

Other things that the government could do to help the automotive industry, she said, was lower the bond requirement for completely knocked down (CKD) units, reduce interest rates on auto financing, and bring down the required 20-percent down payment for vehicle purchases.

The government could also choose to buy CKD units assembled locally when they re-fleet instead of purchasing completely built up (CBU) units, she said.

Even CBU importers would benefit from expanding CKD assembling as this would spur overall sales, both for locally assembled vehicles and imported ones, Lee added.

She said Camapi also wanted to be permanently included in the yearly Investment Priorities Plan, with the 2009-2011 plan for completion in mid-March.

"The government and the industry have to work together to reduce the cost of doing business. Right now, we're still seeing growth [of around 2-4 percent]. It's a lower forecast [than last year's 8-percent annual growth], but there's no reason to say there will be negative growth in 2009," she said.

For this year, she said Camapi's other initiatives to help spur growth in the industry included a revision of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement, the enforcement of applicable laws on counterfeit auto parts, the harmonization of standards, and the implementation of Single Window Inspection Program.

Camapi would likewise work together with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on emission and safety, with the Department of Energy on the implementation of the Philippine Biofuels Act, and with the Department of Transportation and Communications on road safety.

Various industry groups have been prodding the government to provide them with assistance to weather the impact of the global economic crisis.

Accountancy practice

corporate securities rdo

Raoul J. Fortunbrizzi

GLOBALIZATION HAS BECOME A convenient excuse for developed countries to justify their intrusion in certain commercial activities of developing countries that, by law and tradition, are reserved to the latter's citizens.

If the intrusion/treaty is entered, the intruder engages to promote tactics to force the target country into agreeing to the unwelcome entry using global fashion as cover for its action.

When the tables are turned, expect the developed country to invoke (what else?) law and tradition to thwart the spatial country's attempt to enjoy the benefits of globalization.

In the guise of consultancy work, many foreign lawyers, engineers and architects have come to the country to engage in activities that are temporarily performed by their Filipino counterpart.

If the engagement is isolated and the imported partake have been secured, there's no problem. But it becomes a cause for concern if the *paraisoer* is permanently and, in the process, adversely affects the interest of our own professionals.

Reports are rife that the local accountancy field is in the crosshairs of foreign sorcerering firms.

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No longer content with simply forging affiliation ties with foreign CPAs, they want to play a more active role in the country's accounting and auditing activities.

Citizenship

Like law, engineering and architecture, the accountancy profession is a jealously nationalized activity, meaning, it is reserved only to Filipino citizens. Those who do and possess that qualifications may be allowed to engage in its practice only after meeting certain requirements.

The Philippine Accountancy Act of 2004 (Republic Act No. 9298) specifies Filipino citizenship, as one, as a qualification to take the licensure examination needed to qualify a person to practice accountancy in the country.

The manner by which that citizenship was obtained — by birth or through naturalization — is immaterial.

The citizenship requirement must be fulfilled at the time of filing of the application to take the exams, not any time after.

The citizenship criterion in the practice of accountancy like the other professions, reflects the government's "protectionist" policy toward our professionals.

In essence, it means giving preferential treatment to Filipinos in the exercise of their profession in our country, especially in areas that are imbued with public interest.

The discriminatory policy is understandable. Recalcitrant-spurning country in the world would adopt a policy that would put its citizens at a disadvantage vis-à-vis foreigners in the pursuit of livelihood activities within its territory.

Exceptions

Although foreign accountants can, in special cases, be allowed to *phy data nadal ere*, the law against such activity is evident from the way such permission is produced in the first.

A foreign board passion is necessary in the country to initiate an action, "in the interest provided by the rules of reciprocity by specific provision of law," in our country allows Filipinos to practice that profession without restriction.

The requirement that the proof of reciprocal treatment has to be validated through the judicial process (which is not exactly a country's hallmarks of the law's intention is final, as much as possible, the opportunity of any foreigners to compete with the locals in handling domestic accounting work.

There is cocoa though for foreign accountants to practice their profession in the country temporarily so far solution permitted time.

The Board of Accountancy, the present licensing authority in Ohio, with the approval of the Professional Regulations Commission, may issue temporary or special permits for such short engagements.

That privilege is limited to foreigners "called for consultation on or for a specific purpose which, in the judgment of the board, is essential for the development of the country."

Expertise

In addition, it must be shown to the board's satisfaction that there is no Filipino CPA who is qualified to undertake that particular work.

Considering the previous requirement and requirement of our local firms practice, the latter requirement is predicated by a "dead letter" in any effort to justify the entry of foreign accountants.

The special permit may also be granted to foreign accountants who come here for the sole purpose of teaching or sharing his skills in fields that are essential to accountancy education in the country.

A similar treatment may be given to foreigners who are internationally recognized for their expertise in a branch of accountancy and whose services are needed to help in the advancement of accountancy in the local scene.

There are others in the Accountancy Act the accountants to this part of the world to come up with rules and standards that will enable them to engage in cross-border accountancy and auditing services.

But getting to that goal may not be that easy because each country has its own laws and traditions on accountancy that are not easy to set aside or modify to allow a seamless practice across the region.

Until agreement on permissible regional practice is reached, our laws on accountancy will have to be followed in accordance with the letter and spirit of the law.

A contrary position could have serious monetary and penal consequences.

(The feedback, please write to jjsalazar@inquirer.com.ph)

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GET STUCK IN AXN

S&P: Cut in key rates not enough to boost RP growth

By Michelle V. Rosario

ALTHOUGH SAYING MONETARY policy will help ease the impact of the global turmoil on the Philippines, that effort may not be enough to prevent a stock slowdown in the growth of the country's economy, according to Standard & Poor's (S&P).

In a paper on its latest outlook on Asia-Pacific countries, S&P said the Philippines would most likely grow between 2.2 and 2.7 percent this year.

But under a worst-case scenario, with existing firm audit, the Philippines would only expand by 0.5 percent, if not register a flat growth.

The growth forecast under S&P's baseline scenario was based on the assumption that the United States, which accounts for about 14 percent of the Philippines' export income and is home to many overseas Filipino workers, would contract by 2 percent this year. The worst-case scenario, on the other hand, assumed a 3.6-percent contraction of the world's biggest economy.

"With the threat of inflation fading steadily, monetary policy will continue to support growth in 2009," S&P said in its outlook. "But it will fail to fully offset the impact of slowing external demand and declining remittances."

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) slashed its key policy rates by a total of 300 basis points last year (percentage point) since December, in an effort to jump-prime the economy. BSP officials were hoping that lower interest rates would encourage banks to help support investment initiatives by lending more, instead of depositing their funds with the central bank.

The BSP's overnight borrowing and lending rates stand at 5 and 7 percent, following the same cut. The latest of which was a 50-basis-point reduction on Jan. 29.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the central bank had room to ease policy rates because inflation was on the wane.

S&P said the slowdown in inflation was a blessing for developing economies like the Philippines, explaining that this development would partly offset the impact of weakening remittances on household consumption.

S&P expects the global economic turmoil to take its toll on remittances from overseas Filipino workers.

The credit-rating firm also said it expected inflation to average between 2.7 and 4.2 percent this year, much slower than last year's 9.3 percent.

PRULINK	PRU LIFE UK
Investments of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Unit Prices February 5, 2009	Unit Prices January 27, 2009
Bond Fund - Peso	1.13890	1.13481
Managed Fund - Peso	1.14878	1.15094
Growth Fund - Peso	1.09865	1.07758
Equity Fund - Peso	0.63005	0.60073
Bond Fund - US Dollar	1.0301	1.0317
Secured Return Fund I	0.98773	0.98989

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GSIS members took out ₱34B in loans in 2008

By Roneel W. Dasalla

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE System (GSIS) released a total of P34 billion in loans to its members in 2008—12.4 percent lower than the P38.82 billion released in 2007.

A total of 398,955 GSIS members last year availed of the loans under the consolidated loan program (ConsoLoan) of the government pension fund. The latest figure was lower than the 457,316 seen the previous year.

Under the ConsoLoan program, five different loan packages have been consolidated into one—salary loan, restructured salary loan, reduced salary loan, emergency loan, petition and summary case-created salary loan.

The consolidated penalties or surcharges incurred from the five loans are also waived when availing of the ConsoLoan, which is payable in 60 months.

Aside from making the various types of loans easier to manage, ConsoLoan is intended to give members higher benefits amount, which is the amount of a salary loan, plus waive the borrower's lifetime salary.

According to Winston F. Garcia, GSIS president and general manager, ConsoLoan proceeds "are reduced directly or indirectly into the economy, as availing members normally use the money either to purchase real estate properties or start a business."

Garcia added that, while lower the rates would be, "the money would eventually find its way back to the market."

Last month, the GSIS' total assets increased by 9 percent to P480.9 billion in 2008, from P441 billion the previous year.

Garcia said the pension fund was expected to have hit its net investment target of P50 billion for 2008—a quarter higher than its 2007 income.

He said the increase was largely due to foreign exchange gains, improved members contributions and the sale of GSIS' 27 percent stake in Manila Electric Co. (or Meralco) to Corp. for P9.29 billion.

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Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga-Espino

Cutting ad spend will also cut sales growth

By Roger Pe
Contributor

YOU WOULDN'T WANT THAT

While everyone seems to be cowering in fear because of the recession, this chocolate brand thrilled gourmandized puff of business pessimism, prompting Ad Age last week to raise a toast with this headline—"Booze in Ad Spending Buys Off for Russia's Chocolate Favorite."

And they have figures to show: Fourth-quarter income and yearly earnings up by 31 percent to $82 million.

Reasonable reinvention

According to Ad Age, the company ended 2008 with a "reasonable momentum," attributing this to "increased advertising, consumers trading down from premium chocolates and price increases."

Should one advertise during a recession? Of course, yes. The more you retreat, the more sales will recede. The more you cut back, the more competition will smack.

As they say "when the going gets tough, the tough doesn't skimp on ad budgets."

From that aspect, here are three nuggets of wisdom to ponder:

• "The first reaction is to cut, cut, cut, and advertising is one of the first things to go. As companies slash advertising in a downturn, they leave empty space in consumers' minds for more aggressive marketers to make strong inroads."—Peter Fader, Wharton University, marketing professor.

• "A great deal of evidence suggests that it is not a good idea to reduce marketing spend during recession to refer to his financial targets. Doing so may leave your brand in a less competitive position when the economy recovers."—Nigel Hollis, chief global analyst of Millward Brown, one of the world's leading research agencies.

• "If someone tells you they are cutting back their ad budget because of a recession, ask why they advertise in the first place. Business history books are full of examples of companies that maltreated or increased their ad budgets during recessions, and found that at recession's end they had leap-frogged their competitors by wide margins."—Josh Gordon, author of "Marketing Common to the New Economy."

A similar case study happened to a well-known beverage brand in the Philippines. All it takes is to look at its media spending pattern. Look where it zooms:

Recession or not, advertising should continue

WHEN was the last time a TV ad really moved you? Ignored on Star Sports last Sunday during the Nachi-Fedexor Asiangame Open, Men's Singles Final, this TV commercial by Christian Foundation points into the dark realities of how many people live without water.

For a few quiet minutes, the camera zooms in a girl inside her immaculate home. Until it moves and tracks into the inner recesses of the house, the viewer isn't given an inkling of what is going on and what she is doing. Then comes the shock: she is taking a bath and scooping water out of a toilet bowl.

Shock value

While similar themes had been done before, this one goes beyond shock value. It dances only naive to people's apathy; they finished questions help create more media noise for this across the world will know (4 stars).

* * *

"SPAM is one with the Internet." Two-bicycle commercials are winning hearts of many and will want to take you over if you haven't fallen in love already. Both can stimulate their core message (target can easily reference. To make it the story short, the Mabhorrunch gets for consequence—"Ang ripper ng, baka your fly is open!" The other can't get the drift, even if a big "NO" (and it starting him right in the face. (3.5 stars)

Going small

The world has indeed "shrunk" and gone small, it seems to the latest global campaigns and what other ad agencies are doing are concerned. Click on five of the most popular creative ad sites and, voilà, yacht updates! Even if you're miles away from advertising festivals or you've missed Internet Archive:

• www.lexusbrand.com (now managed by Campaign Brief).

• www.adage.com (Ads are Creativity Ink).

• www.muchos.org (One Show).

• www.clioawards.com.

• www.cyberflow.com.

These sites have completely overhauled their copy subscription by giving you all ads you can gobble in a jiffy and free (as long as you're not busy to register) right where you are.

A number of Pinoy ads had passed the pages of these sites, chosen by high standard selection process. The exposure guarantees unmistakable mileage in top creative directors, copywriters, art directors, cinematographers and TV commercial directors from around the world count on these sites at any given time.

Rating: 5 stars (ground-breaking, can have up the world), 4 stars (category leading), 3 stars (noteworthy, entertainingly good), 2.5 stars (fair), 1 star (poor).

SALES growth comes from maintaining or boosting ad expenditure wisely

* * *

Has marketing changed?

(First of two parts)

WE COME TO THE LAST LESSON

Several speakers of a student we've named PIP—frustrated and fearful of the future. PIP's last question is about marketing in Marketing.

If you Google the topic "Marketing Careers," you will receive 389 million websites and other sites. If you make the topic more location-specific, that is, "Marketing Careers in the Philippines," it will give you 22.4 million websites and references.

The different websites' treatment of the topic may be broad (as a title of an article hints, "Careers in Marketing") or more group-specific, like marketing careers in Intel, Chevron, Investors and the like.

If you open any one of these websites, you'll get much more than what you are looking for, and not even answer to your question cannot even approach the details and necessary of the information they provide.

Some encourage you to go online and source the information you need from search engines.

Damaging assumptions

For our current situation, we decided that the source IBM.com should continue from where our column of January 30th ended.

To recall, that was with the advice from our reader named Cielo, who told PIP: "Over the years, the basics of marketing haven't changed much. That's what you need to learn in school. The Theory."

As to experience and the translation of theory into practice, Cielo's core schooling led him to say: "Understandably, they can not teach experience in school."

Those are two assumptions that can be convincing, or even persuasive, or your own marketing problem diagnosing brain power.

So here are two questions we're answering here:

• "Have the basics of marketing, in fact, not changed much over the years?"

• "Is it true that school can not teach marketing experience?"

Answer To state that "over the years, the basics of marketing haven't changed much" is not wrong. The problem is it right. It's half right. So to prescribe to PIP that those basics are what he needs to learn in school is half wrong and half right. And that is a risky prescription.

The assessment reminds us of how, at the start of the current global economic crisis, some economists defended the Bush administration's economic guidelines during that their "economic fundamentals remain unchanged and therefore sound."

Relying on some of course not wrong, but neither was it right. It was, in the case of marketing basics, just half right.

The declaration is a statement that belongs in a class the economician John Langshaw Austin in his book, "How to Do Things with Words," called "performative statements."

By simply declaring that something is so, a performative statement creates its reality. So by stating that our economic fundamentals are unchanged and sound, this statement created its truth. People believe and they react to many value in some cases on cynics.

Are the basics still the same?

Similarly with the statement that says the basics of marketing haven't changed, it defies the way consumers truth and people need to take what it's saying almost as Gospel truth.

Of course, those of us who had lived through three or more decades of marketing history and have kept current with how marketing has evolved have been witness to the whole truth. That history says that the basics of marketing have changed and it has changed a whole lot both to form and to substance.

Not just the 4 Rs

Indeed, even the most basic of marketing, namely its definition, has taken on a substantive transformation.

It used to be that marketing as a strategy is just the four Ps or the marketing mix.

In our bygone days we were called, marketing is no longer just the four Ps but is a sequence of three processes: "STP plus the four P plus the support Ps."

STP is of course the process of segmenting, targeting and positioning.

In a marketing point of marketing, ITP requires that we begin our marketing from where our target consumers are, that is, with their priority values, and not from where we are as managers. That's what the four Ps are all about—starting from where we are as consumers.

The four Ps are not just a checklist anymore. They are now partitioned into two sections: the first of these is the process of delivering to the target consumers the product via "the support Ps." These are price, placement and promotion, all in support of bringing and delivering the four P to the target consumers.

There is also an much change in both substance and form in the other more basic concepts and process of market segmentation.

We now speak of market segmentation as a marketer behavior that must respect self-segmentation (that is, segmentation as a consumer behavior).

Then there are two ways to follow the prescription of "doing segmentation." That's about the question of when to continue the segmentation process as a succession of 2, 3 or more levels of segmenting.

'Hybridizing'

If you look closely at each of these two examples, you begin to understand the source of many impressions that our basics of marketing have not changed much.

In each case, the "new" did not completely replace the "old." They simply converged into a hybrid of what's useful of the "old" combined with that of the "new."

This hybridizing always happens whenever the "new" technology does not completely overshoot the usefulness of the "old."

If you play golf, it's pretty much the same. The new technology does not render obsolete the "old" way of playing or getting the ball to the green and into the hole. Look at the hybrid golf clubs that have come out in the past years. Hybrids have used the new technology used in making the bigger, more forgiving drivers—the clubs used to hit a ball long and far away from the tee—and yet retain the precision of the irons...so make a club that can be used in the middle of the fairway does perform as like a driver.

They've almost replaced most of the said to long irons. Because it is easier to hit for beginners and weekend players. Put you can still use the "old" technology...the classic irons...to get closer to the hole.

And so, some of what's in the "old" are still useful. That's how the soft technology of marketing has changed.

The upshot is, we persist in the perception that what's in the old are the "basics."

(To be continued)

Cost-cutting stops at training

By Tess Arceo-Dumlao

THERE ARE JUST SOME ITEMS THAT retail companies, no matter how cash strapped, just cannot afford to strike off their budget. And training is one of the areas and investors to make front liners happy are saving them.

After all, it is these staff members who provide that first and crucial contact between the brand and the consumer.

This is why for Pinoy and Pinay, one of the country's leading sellers of women's apparel, human resources training is never open to cost cutting.

"We will continue to invest to enhancing the skills of people. We are in a business where customer service is very important," explains Pinoy and Pinay vice president Rosanna Ang Ba-Illas.

"We would not want to create that lower-than-decent impact on the quality of the products and services that we provide our consumers. We can cut on such areas as office supplies, event sponsorships and electricity consumption in our head office," Ba-Illas adds.

Continuous learning

As for as the continuous training goes, Ba-Illas says Pinoy and Pinay will zero in on development programs that have to do with sales, customer service and merchandising on grounds that training in these crucial areas contributed to its growth last year.

"Having qualified, hard working and well-trained employees contributes significantly to any business," she stresses.

There are 51 Pinoy and Pinay boutiques all over the country and the group sits up-scare-10 Spree boutiques, two Fletcher outlets, one Bio and R.A.F boutique.

Plains and Prints caters to the young professionals while Spree sells to a younger female market. Fletcher deals with children's apparel, the with physician ladies and R.A.F (which stands for Rich and Famous) with the more high-end women's apparel market.

Ba-Illas continues to look at opportunities for expansion noting that she does not see the Philippines being as hard hit by the global economic recession.

"Despite the fact that the Philippines will start to feel the effects of the recession in 2009. I am still hopeful that the year will not be as bad as they predict. Our country has survived many hardships and we are a resilient and resourceful people," she adds.

Ronald Gutierrez, general manager of Plains Philippines Inc. distributes the Plains line of specialty products from Japan for athletes and sports enthusiasts, has a more grim outlook for the retail sector this year.

"It will be a tough year for most retailers this year as we experience the effects of the global financial market collapse in most developed countries," Gutierrez says.

Tightening purse strings

But despite the challenges, Gutierrez shares Ba-Illas' views that spending on training will not take place if retail finishes hope to continue growing their business despite tightening purse strings.

"I believe that this is a key business initiative that any retailer or business for that matter must not ignore or take out altogether. Retailing is still a people business where communicating product knowledge as well as professional salesmanship has as much impact as the features and benefits of the product itself," he says.

For Plains, training this year will mainly deal with product knowledge, considering that the value of its products is not apparent to those who are not familiar with the brand.

"Without our sales personnel must improve on is the ability to be able to provide solutions to customer needs, rather than go the route of just selling the product. This skill involves knowledge of the target market, competing products and concepts, as well as the ability to integrate product knowledge, market knowledge and customer preferences into an integrated and highly enjoyable customer shopping experience," he says.

Jewelry retailer Just Jewels, meanwhile, will devise training programs that will improve its front liners' skills and knowledge in jewelry and customer service. This it has to do to keep their morale high and sales coming in.

"Our front liners can make or break our business, as they are will be discouraged to sell in tough times, we focus on providing them further training on gold and diamond, refresher courses and customer service skills," explains Just Jewels general manager Tricia Mojica.

Incentive program

To keep them motivated, Mojica says Just Jewels plans to come up with a good incentive program to drive up sales. She says the company is bracing for tough times ahead considering that people will surely devote their budget to basic items.

"Although Just Jewels may relatively unaffected by the local and worldwide economic crunch in 2008, we foresee that people will begin to feel the pinch and react to its effects this year. As such, our retail forecast for 2009 is bleak. While we do anticipate a percentage growth in our sales versus 2008, the anticipated increase will be considerably less compared to previous years," Mojica says.

But even then, Just Jewels will continue to invest in incentive schemes, training and recognition programs for the sales personnel to keep them upbeat and going after their sales mate.

RP presses need to uncap CMI drawing facility

BSP exec says tough trade climate calls for tougher measures

By Michelle V. Rono

THE PHILIPPINES HAS LED CALLS FOR an increase in the amount of assistance countries may tap from the liquidity facility under the Chiang Mai Initiative (CMI), stressing that the worsening global economic climate calls for tougher counter-measures.

Under the existing CMI agreement, any nation belonging in the Asean +3 (a group of their nine liquidity-starved foreign currencies from other members. Each member country has earmarked a certain amount that it may lend to other members of the group to help them address liquidity problems.

Total commitment to the CMI currently stand at $83 billion. Japan, for instance, has offered $3 billion to each of the countries, including the Philippines, with which it has a bilateral swap arrangement under the CMI. The Philippines has allocated $3 billion.

But under CMI rules, any country undergoing liquidity crunch may tap a maximum of only 20 percent of the funds committed by another member country at any given time.

Amando Tetangco Jr., governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, said there must be flexibility for member-countries to borrow more under the CMI.

"We [the Philippines] want the 20-percent limit to be increased," he said. "Any country facing liquidity problem should be able to draw a bigger amount."

He explained that the CMI should provide "quick resolutions."

With the global economic turmoil expected in western this year, the BSP governor said available assistance to a country in need of liquidity should be enhanced.

According to Tetangco, the Philippines has formally raised the proposal of increasing the assistance threshold under the CMI. He added that other member-countries were receptive to the proposal.

Apart from the Philippines, other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations are Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Myanmar, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia. Also, China, Japan and South Korea have joined the regional group in the CMI.

The CMI was created to address liquidity problems experienced by South-east Asian countries during the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

Inflation hits . . .

From page B1

BSP officials are hoping the cut in the policy rates, one of the means to ease monetary policy, would encourage banks to lend more, instead of parking the funds at the central bank as deposits.

Despite the aggressive cut to policy rates, the BSP said it would not hesitate easing monetary policy further if it deems such a measure warranted to boost the economy given

SMC unit's bonds . . .

From page B1

ment is $460b earnings, in strong cash flow generation and managed debt utilization, and the company's demonstrated financial flexibility" the domestic credit rating agency said.

a global slowdown.

The cost of fuel, light and water fell 3.4 percent year-on-year in January. This followed the 1.7 percent contraction in December.

Meanwhile, food, beverages and tobacco prices rose 13.2 percent (easing from 12.7 percent in December), clothing, 4.9 percent; housing and repairs, 4.3 percent; services, 3.2 percent, and miscellaneous items, 3.6 percent.

NOTICE TO MANILA WATER CUSTOMERS AND THE PUBLIC
WATER RATES FOR THE EAST ZONE

Effective 15 days after publication, Manila Water Company Inc. will implement a **12.2% Consumer Price Index (CPI) Adjustment and a Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA) OF 1.03%** of Basic Charge as recommended by MWSS Regulatory Office in its Resolution No. 09-002-CA dated 03 February 2009 and as approved/confirmed by the MWSS Board Resolution No. 2009-025 dated 03 February 2009.

Manila Water Company, the East Zone concessionaire, covers the following areas:

Manila (San Andres and Sta. Ana only; **Quezon City** (east of San Juan River, West Avenue, EDSA, Congressional and Mindanao Ave., Districts of Tandang Sora, Pasong Tamo and Matandang Balara), **Makati City** (east of South Super Highway), **Mandaluyong City, San Juan, Marikina City, Pasig City, Pateros, Taguig, - all in Metro Manila; Rizal Province.**

MANILA WATER COMPANY, INC.
WATER RATES FOR THE EAST ZONE

Manila Water

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Consuming more than 10 cu.m.			
First	10 cu.m.	69.16 /Cons	77.60 /Cons
Next	10 cu.m.	8.44 /Cu.m.	9.47 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	15.66 /Cu.m.	17.95 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	21.07 /Cu.m.	23.64 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	24.62 /Cu.m.	27.62 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	25.78 /Cu.m.	28.93 /Cu.m.
Next	80 cu.m.	28.93 /Cu.m.	90.02 /Cu.m.
Next	80 cu.m.	29.28 /Cu.m.	31.52 /Cu.m.
Over	300 cu.m.	29.28 /Cu.m.	33.82 /Cu.m.

SEMI-BUSINESS		Old Rate	New Rate
First	10 cu.m.	118.06 /Cons	77.60 /Cons *
Next	10 cu.m.	14.13 /Cu.m.	15.85 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	17.42 /Cu.m.	19.55 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	22.15 /Cu.m.	24.83 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	25.78 /Cu.m.	28.93 /Cu.m.
Next	20 cu.m.	26.93 /Cu.m.	30.22 /Cu.m.
Next	60 cu.m.	28.09 /Cu.m.	31.52 /Cu.m.
Next	60 cu.m.	29.28 /Cu.m.	32.82 /Cu.m.
Over	200 cu.m.	30.49 /Cu.m.	34.21 /Cu.m.

BUSINESS GROUP I		Old Rate	New Rate
First	10 cu.m.	314.33 /Cons	353.66 /Cons
Next	90 cu.m.	31.47 /Cu.m.	35.31 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	31.66 /Cu.m.	35.51 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	31.74 /Cu.m.	35.61 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	31.82 /Cu.m.	35.70 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	32.00 /Cu.m.	35.90 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	32.09 /Cu.m.	36.00 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	32.19 /Cu.m.	36.11 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	32.38 /Cu.m.	36.31 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	32.46 /Cu.m.	36.41 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	32.64 /Cu.m.	36.61 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	32.71 /Cu.m.	36.70 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	32.80 /Cu.m.	36.80 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	32.89 /Cu.m.	36.90 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	33.07 /Cu.m.	37.10 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	33.16 /Cu.m.	37.21 /Cu.m.
Next	1000 cu.m.	33.25 /Cu.m.	37.31 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	33.42 /Cu.m.	37.50 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	33.51 /Cu.m.	37.60 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	33.60 /Cu.m.	37.70 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	33.78 /Cu.m.	37.90 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	33.87 /Cu.m.	38.00 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	33.96 /Cu.m.	38.10 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.14 /Cu.m.	38.31 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.22 /Cu.m.	38.39 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.31 /Cu.m.	38.50 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.40 /Cu.m.	38.60 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.58 /Cu.m.	38.80 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.67 /Cu.m.	38.90 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.76 /Cu.m.	39.00 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.84 /Cu.m.	39.20 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	34.93 /Cu.m.	39.29 /Cu.m.
Over	10000 cu.m.	35.11 /Cu.m.	39.39 /Cu.m.

BUSINESS GROUP II		Old Rate	New Rate
First	10 cu.m.	349.11 /Cons	391.60 /Cons
Next	90 cu.m.	34.92 /Cu.m.	39.56 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	34.40 /Cu.m.	38.60 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	34.67 /Cu.m.	38.90 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	34.84 /Cu.m.	39.20 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	35.11 /Cu.m.	39.58 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	35.38 /Cu.m.	39.75 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	35.65 /Cu.m.	40.00 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	35.82 /Cu.m.	40.18 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	36.09 /Cu.m.	40.50 /Cu.m.
Next	100 cu.m.	36.36 /Cu.m.	40.80 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	36.54 /Cu.m.	41.00 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	36.80 /Cu.m.	41.28 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	36.98 /Cu.m.	41.49 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	37.23 /Cu.m.	41.77 /Cu.m.
Next	200 cu.m.	37.51 /Cu.m.	42.08 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	37.69 /Cu.m.	42.28 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	37.96 /Cu.m.	42.58 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	38.23 /Cu.m.	42.88 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	38.40 /Cu.m.	43.08 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	38.67 /Cu.m.	43.38 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	38.94 /Cu.m.	43.69 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	39.11 /Cu.m.	43.88 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	39.38 /Cu.m.	44.18 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	39.55 /Cu.m.	44.40 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	39.82 /Cu.m.	44.68 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	40.09 /Cu.m.	44.98 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	40.27 /Cu.m.	45.18 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	40.54 /Cu.m.	45.49 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	40.80 /Cu.m.	45.78 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	40.98 /Cu.m.	45.98 /Cu.m.
Next	500 cu.m.	41.35 /Cu.m.	46.39 /Cu.m.
Over	10000 cu.m.	41.81 /Cu.m.	46.91 /Cu.m.

* Based on RR 2009-03 dated 31 March 2008 and confirmed by MWSS ECT Res. No. 2008-084 dated 24 April 2008, the first 10 cubic meter of water consumed in Semi-Business customers shall be billed at Residential Rate.

B. Foreign Currency Differential Adjustment (FCDA)

A percentage of the Basic Charge reviewed & adjusted quarterly depending on the fluctuation of the FOREX

2. A. Environmental Charge (EC)
12% of Water Charge

B. Sewerage Charge (SC)
40% of the Water Charge for Residential and Semi Business
45% of the Water Charge for Business Group I & II customers

3. Maintenance Service Charge

Meter Size	Amount (Pesos/cum.)
1/2" or 13mm	1.50
3/4" or 20mm	2.00
1"or 25mm	3.00

Meter Size	Amount (Pesos/cum.)
1 1/4" or 40mm	4.00
2" or 50mm	6.00
3" or 75mm	10.00

Meter Size	Amount (Pesos/cum.)
4" or 100mm	30.00
6" or 150mm	36.00
8" or 200mm	60.00

4. Value Added Tax (VAT) 12% for the Charges 1, 2, and 3

THE MONTHLY BILL IS THE SUM OF 1,2,3, AND 4

Approved by:

MANUEL F. GORDON
MWSS RO Chief Regulator
2/03/09

DIONISIO JOSE M. ALLADO
MWSS Administrator

ANTONINO T. AQUINO
MWCI President

For further inquiries you may call Manila Water Company Hotline at 1627 or visit www.manilawater.com

BUSINESS

PSALM to rebid 100-MW Agusan facility

By Amy R. Remo

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND LIABILITIES Management Corp. (PSALM) has started the second round of bidding for the 100-megawatt power barge in Brgy. Sta. Ana in Nasipit, Agusan del Norte.

In a statement, PSALM said interested parties were given up to Feb. 12, 2009 to submit their letters of intent.

According to bid documents, interested investors must execute a confidentiality agreement and an undertaking with the government power firm, and pay a nonrefundable participation fee of $2,000.

National Power Corp. said those from part of the preparatory requirements and should be completed by Feb. 13.

PSALM said it would hold a prebid conference for prospective bidders on Feb. 18, and that bids for the power barge facility should be submitted on April 15, 2009.

The bid documents also stated that part of the conditions for the sale of the facility is for the barge-mounted bunker-fired diesel generating power station to remain in its current location in Agusan del Norte, for at least three years subject to the terms of the final transaction documents.

PSALM first offered the power facility in October last year. The bidding, however, was declared a failure because of lack of investor interest.

In a separate development, PSALM reported that two investor groups have signified interest in bidding for the 35-MW Naga land-based gas turbine power plant or the Cebu 1 Power Plant Complex in Naga, Cebu, Cebu Private Power Corp. previously owned the plant.

The two Filipino investor groups have reportedly completed PSALM's prequalification requirements for the Naga power plant bidding, it added.

Pre-bid conference on Feb. 18; deadline for bid submission on April 15

Palawan power problems seen worsening

PALAWAN BUSINESS LEADERS WARNED that the power crisis in the province and in Puerto Princesa City, in particular, could get worse unless urgent and radical solutions were put in place immediately.

They said the persistent and prolonged brownouts in the Puerto Princesa City subtab were increased in frequency and duration over the past few months, "could jeopardize efforts to make Palawan a major player in the international tourism market."

In a statement, Palawan Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce president Vicente Tan, who is also the former head of the Palawan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said the brownouts which had been going on for two years now was a major disincentive to investors and tourists who might be wont to locate to or visit the province.

Despite the series of dialogues with officials of the Palawan Electric Cooperative (Paleco), he said, no clear solution and action had been set in place to address the issue."

In a meeting with Palawan business leaders last year, National Power Corp. officials said there were some 40 MW of installed power generating capacities in the province. The officials said the peak requirement of Palawan and Puerto Princesa was 21 MW, which means there was a surplus in generated power. This could only mean the problem stemmed from the distribution system, which is the responsibility of Paleco, the business leaders said.

There is no shortage of power in Palawan, only a shortage of good distribution service, they pointed out.

The Palawan power woes might inversely affect efforts to market the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park, which is within the jurisdiction of the capital city.

Vetoing COA emasculation

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez

COMMENTARY

ON JAN. 29, IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE P300-million cut in the Commission on Audit (COA) budget would bring the agency's allocation down to only P1.3 billion. Salaries Manalo of the COA Public Information Office said this would decrease COA's share in the nation's budget from 0.3 percent in 2002 to only 0.2[illegible] percent in 2009. This would be especially unfortunate for the Department of Agriculture's COA, which has done laudable work in the past few years.

The president has the right to veto any line item in the national budget approved by Congress. However, she should be judicious to exercise the greatest good of the nation.

The ill-advised presidential veto of the "right to information" budget section which would have allowed the private sector access to the 2007 budget should not be repeated for 2009. This section can be a very powerful tool in controlling corruption this year. However, this provision will be of no use if the COA budget is cut. The 2008 million COA budget cut, which will help in achieving the same objective of minimizing corruption.

3 anti-corruption allies

During my 14 years in the government, I had three main allies in fighting corruption: The private sector, the press and COA.

Guided by then Trade Secretary Jose Concepcion's philosophy of private sector participation in government, the private sector proved an effective buffer against pressure from corrupt government officials. The best example was the micro-enterprise "linking in Trade" program, which I initiated as part of my responsibilities in eight years.

The provincial loan committees were composed of only one government [the provincial DTI director] and four private sector representatives. When attempts were made by powerful politicians and corrupt government officials to get loans for undeserving and even corrupt projects, the private sector representatives would immediately turn them down. Many DTI provincial directors told me that if government personnel were solely in charge of the loan decision, it would have been extremely difficult to resist the tremendous political pressure because their very jobs would be at stake.

Learning from this experience, I then consistently included private sector participation in all relevant government decision-making bodies wherever possible. Unscrupulous politicians or government officials would often be deterred from their corruption attempts when they found out about the newly instituted transparency mechanisms with private sector involvement.

When corrupt deals still pushed through because of more powerful individuals, we worked with the press as a powerful ally to abort these deals. With this exposure, they often screamed from their tutuol plaza. Others, fearing the same public exposure and humiliation, would be deterred from executing their devious schemes.

COA as key partner

Many in the government bureaucracy look at COA as an obstacle that imposes unreasonable requirements. While I understand this sometimes happens, I looked at COA as one of my best anticorruption allies when I was in government. When a colleague would mention a plan involving corruption, I would tell COA, which in turn would warn my colleague about violating the law. If the plan were still implemented, COA would cite this in their annual report and the corresponding penalties stated. My great disappointment is that COA reports are not given the appropriate attention they deserve, and many wrongdoers still go unpunished.

COA personnel are also often compromised because of the meager budgets they get. For example, many COA auditors hold office at municipal halls. Manalo said under such a setup, these auditors are dependent on their host agency making it difficult to come out with results unfavorable to the latter.

From my own experience, I have found government officials say they would assign a government agency's vehicle for the COA auditor's own use, or fund their provincial and foreign trips because the COA budget could not support those legitimate needs. In return, they expected the COA reports to be correspondingly favorable to them. Some COA personnel would succumb to these pressures, which could have been avoided if COA had gotten a reasonable budget.

Presidential veto needed

It is but enough that the COA share of the national budget is only 60 percent of what it was seven years ago. I urge Congress to cut further the 2009 COA budget proposed by P100 million is adding insult to injury. The private sector and the press are our partners in our anticorruption crusade. But the COA is potentially our most important ally because it is legally mandated to fight corruption. We should not let the Presidents hasten their demise. Let us veto this COA emasculation, if only to show that she will aggressively oppose the weakening of forces that fight the corruption currently plaguing the country.

(The author is chair of Agrinvest, former secretary for presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary for agriculture, and trade and industry. For inquiries, e-mail agrinvest@philpacnet.com or mobile (632) 0922211123.)

Globe may borrow P5B for capex

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

MARKET HEAVYWEIGHT Globe Telecom Inc is considering borrowing P5 billion from the local debt market before the end of March to partially finance its expansion, officials said.

In an investor's briefing, Globe chief finance officer Delfin Gonzalez Jr. said Globe's capital expenditure budget for this year of P20.8-P.000 million will be spent largely on the consumer broadband business, including 3G and 2G business.

3G refers to the third generation of mobile phone standards and technology, succeeding 2G and is associated with the ability to transfer both voice data like a telephone call and non-voice data such as downloading info or music, exchanging email and instant messaging.

Last year, Globe Telecom earmarked P19.9 billion for capex.

Of the total capital expenditure this year, some 8.9 million will be spent on cable facilities and other support and non-recurring capital expenditures.

Globe president Gerardo Ablaza Jr. said he expected four to middle single-digit growth in industry revenue this year, depending on how the Philippine economy expands.

In terms of the broadband business, the growth momentum will continue and will offset declines in the traditional landline service business, officials said.

PLDT cell phone subscribers hit 35.2M

PHILIPPINE LONG DISTANCE TELEphone Co. (PLDT) said its combined mobile phone subscriber base stood at 35.1-million as of end-2008.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, PLDT said Smart Communications Inc. and Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel) reported total subscribers of 30.9 million and 14.2 million subscribers, respectively.

In its 2007 annual report, PLDT said its systemwide cellular phone subscriber base reached 30 million, with Smart accounting for 20.35 million and Piltel, 9.7 million.

The PLDT Group's total cellular subscriber base for the first nine months of 2008 grew sharply, with Smart recording 535 additions of about 347,000 subscribers while Talk 'N Text (Piltel) added about 3.6 million subscribers.

This brought the total figure to 34.2 million in the nine-month period, consisting of 20.9 million Smart subscribers and 13.3 million Talk 'N Text subscribers.

PLDT said, however, that the net addition to the third quarter last year of 935,000 was lower than those registered in the previous quarters. This, it said, was most likely due to the seasonal weakness in the third quarter as well as the effects of higher inflation. — Elizabeth C. Lacson

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITEM	PROJECT LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	BID CLOSE LOCATION	APPROXIMATE AMOUNT (PHP)
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

BDO

NOTICE

BANCO DE ORO UNIBANK, INC. (the "Bank") has received several reports about promotional text messages from individuals and/or entities who are not duly accredited by the Bank, offering Home, Auto, Personal Loans, Credit Card and other products of the Bank.

This is to inform the public that only accredited individuals/entities by the Bank have been authorized to make and send such promotional offers. Should you receive any offer of loans and other products purportedly from the Bank via text or email messages or other means of communication, please immediately call our BDO Customer Contact Center at 631-8000 (Metro Manila) or 1-800-10-631-8000 (Domestic Toll Free) for verification.

Please be warned that the Bank shall not be responsible for any loss or damages as a result of the transactions entered with these unscrupulous individuals and/or entities. The Bank further warns any individual and/or entities to refrain from misrepresenting the Bank, otherwise, it shall not hesitate to file appropriate legal action to protect its interest.

BANCO DE ORO UNIBANK, INC.
MANAGEMENT

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

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Bebe Gandanghart: New style icon?

Rustom Padilla is dead. Long live the Queen

Mabuhay!

Jessel J. Epperson

THE ARTIST FORMERLY KNOWN AS Rustom Padilla has made a stunning reemergence. A three-month stay in New York to study modeling with The society which the butterfly "Bebe Gandanghart," Padilla's new iconic character, emerged from.

"Shit!" says a stunning long-legged lady with a regal bearing akin to "her" (we shall see this person from here on "royal" name.

Welcome to the 21st century, Philippines! The times are a-changin' and Bebe is here to stay.

Bebe is causing shockwaves across the industry and paving the way for a broader way of thinking. Some people are amazed, others find it disturbing. But it takes a real man, or woman, to come out, regardless of what people may think or say.

In a way, Bebe is a true artist who is using her celebrity status as a platform for her art and her style. And her style? It's all her own. Coming out dressed in a babushka? All guts and all glory!

Bebe in babushka

Asked what inspired her to wear a babushka when she arrived in Manila, Bebe Gandanghart said she channeled her style icons—Audrey Hepburn and Jean Eva Cartier. Her mom used to wear a scarf and smaller her shoes on all seven trips to keep her hair in place.

Style inspiration

KEEP it modern. Choose scarves with more contemporary prints and sunglasses in bright, pastelly colors.

Bebe Gandanghari: New style icon?

Style inspiration

Neutral territory
Classic neutral tones for classic evening wear. Minimalist accessories amps the chic factor.

From page 11

Bebe Gandanghari is definitely the job that industry needs to try and start being more daring and just having fun.

In my opinion, I like Bebe more than Beauty. There are so many more styling possibilities! When Bebe debuted, many makeup artists and designers told me they wanted to work with the fiercer style icon. My head began spinning with so many ideas.

But how does one style a dramatic actor turned gorgeous woman? Some might say that this whole exercise is nothing but a freak show, but I see it differently. Bebe is a character that "people are going to watch and that I'm going to portray," Paulo said. And that is the key. We shouldn't focus on what has transpired but what is now available to us.

There are my style inspirations for Bebe as she, we hope, gains prowess in theater, film, and TV. "Fearless Paulita" is dead. Let's all welcome the fabulous Ms Gandanghari.

Email jfashion@inquirer.com.ph

Style inspiration

Shoulder it
An asymmetrical top creates a sexy vibe without baring too much skin.

GANDANGHARI says, "She is also loving outfits ... for now"

Adidas Celebrates 60 Years of Soles and Stripes

Under the banner of Celebrate Originality the adidas Originals Spring Summer 2009 collection pays tribute to the 60th anniversary of Adi Dassler's unmistakable 3-Stripes mark registration. Next to a celebrated "60 Years of Soles and Stripes" line that has something for everybody, the highlight offer presents a comprehensive Women's range. With mix-and-match styles the fresh footwear and apparel range semiases the girl who goes from sport, to street, to style looks as she expresses her individuality with adidas Originals.

The successful "Basic" collection for Women's further develops the fusion of street wear and elegance, offering a reinterpretation of iconic sneakers into women's relaxed silhouettes.

The legendary tennis shoe, the Stan Smith is reinvented to become a peep toe slip on taking inspiration from the iconic men's sneakers using its legendary colour combination of white and green while also offering it in a metallic purple assortment.

The Super Star may best be remembered for its chunky soles, but for the women's range it now becomes an elegant silhouette. Using the authentic details of the three stripes the execution is sleek and fashionable enough to mix and match for day and even party wear. The Super Star Heel is available in black, white and silver.

The makeover doesn't stop there, this time the Super Star joins the iconic training sneaker, or the Gazelle to become the first Ballerina footwear silhouette in the collection. The Gazelle Ballerina is available in our iconic colors red, black and blue with the Super Star Ballerina available in the seasonal trends of metallic silver and violet.

For the first time Originals Women's is moving away from the traditional sneaker designs using the legendary Superstar, Gazelle and Stan Smith and reinventing the styles like never before! Providing every woman with a choice of elegant footwear to attend any house party!

Visit www.adidas.com/originals for more details

IN THE photo during the opening of the Adidas Concept Store, Level 3, Trinoma Mall are (from left) Pamela So Suarez - Head of Go-to-Market Adidas Phils. and Keith Cruz - Manager, Sports Style and SP Training Adidas Phils.

RUSTOM Publishers

Style inspiration

Style inspiration

Striped tease
Keep the stripes to a minimum and mix and match with modern cuts, or add quirky details.

FASHION FLASH FASHION

Valentine gift ideas

Sweet love

FOR VALENTINE'S JEWELRY Guru Mercurio-Sevangard and jeweler Rita have teamed up to pay tribute to love.

Ms. Mercurio-Sevangard, a jewelry designer known for striking crystals such as cornelian, agate, hematite, rainforest and jasper, has created a fashion-forward limited-edition bracelet called "Love Girl."

Rita, meanwhile, has created the ultimate splurge in a sumptuous limited-edition chocolate cake. Made of milk, dark, chocolate ganache, kahlua, cocoa brulee and cake crust topped with a strawberry mirror finish and chocolate sunglasses, the cake is called "Desire."

Together, "Love Girl" and "Desire" may be ordered by delivery in Metro Manila only at 48 Days branches. The gift set called "Passion Box" comes with a special chocolate card to the Tahanan Foundation. A Red Collection of

BELLE "Desire," a delicious combination of milk and dark chocolate ganache with kahlua, cocoa brulee and cake crust topped with a strawberry mirror finish and chocolate sunglasses

Bluewater de Paris also features strawberry and balsamic, raspberry and chocolate, and Pomegranate and Chocolate.

Rita is located at Greenbelt 2, Carmelita Promenade, Ilocos, is 4 and Alabang Town Center (tel. 757-4802 or 729-4802 or visit www.ritapalermo.com).

A SPECIAL set for February: A 14-piece assortment of romantic treats in flavors—strawberry balsamic, raspberry jam and chocolate ganache, and pomegranate jam and chocolate ganache—with Clara Ho sugar-free napkin accessories

Time for love, elegance

This season, Timex, quality maker of stylish timepieces, puts together a collection of premium Valentine's Day gift ideas marked by classic appeal and finely crafted detailing.

The Dimensia Collection delicately combines the classic charms of diamonds with the strength presented by the all-metal makeup of the timepieces.

The Crystal Collection is a line of timepieces ornamented with stunning gemstones or crystals, while the Ladies' Fashion watches offer beautifully designed cases paired with intricate dials that come in both silver and gold.

Timex watches are distributed by Stratmarks International Corp. and are available in all Timex stores and leading department stores.

TIMEX Ladies' Fashion watch in gold

TIMEX Ladies' Fashion watch in silver

Heart of gold

Jewelmer, the leading producer of natural-colored golden Paluwan South Sea pearls, celebrates the season of love with a theme of Golden Sweetheart's gift that combines pearls and fine-quality gold and precious stones, created with exquisite craftsmanship.

Catch the Heart of Gold in Jewelmer's 11 showrooms in the Makati area at The Peninsula Manila Hotel, Makati Shangri-la Hotel and Glorietta 5; in the Pasig Mandaluyong area at Edsa Shangri-la Hotel, SM Megamall, Shangri-la Plaza Mall; in the Manila Area at Rizal Philippine Plaza Hotel and SM Mall of Asia; in the Mandaluyan area at Alabang Town Center; in the Quezon City area at Trinoma mall; and in Cebu at Ayala Center.

ISLANDIA Sterling silver pearl stud earrings

JEWELMER'S Paluwan South Sea pearls possess a sleek sheen coating that gives the pearl a lifetime glow

"In 6 weeks, Zunic helped me achieve what 10 years of traditional slimming failed to do!"

Ray Gasco shows Zunic's success of his waistline (left background: "It was both refreshing and convincing to see a slimming facility that was scientifically credible," he says. He lost 10 pounds and 11 inches around the waist in this span of 6 weeks.

If you're like most of our clients, you've already tried what every one else has to offer. But you value your time, and balked at the prospect of having to wait weeks, if not months, to see measurable results.

You want those excess pounds and unwanted inches gone, yesterday, with as little fuss as possible.

Which is probably your best reason for coming to Zunic!

This client lost 10 pounds and 11 inches around the waist, going from 81 to inches in 6 short weeks.

"Imagine the delight and surprise of my students, family, and friends!" he says. "Some colleagues couldn't believe that I lost so much weight without going under the knife. But above all, I, myself, was amazed. Zunic was able to fulfill every thing they promised! All my weight-loss goals were delivered within the time line I specified, and I felt absolutely no pains during my treatments! I always left Zunic feeling very good about myself."

Zunic employs only the latest and the best non-invasive slimming and body-sculpting technology currently available anywhere in the world. In the hands of our well-trained medical staff, this makes it possible to lose record amounts of excess fat (and unwanted inches) that are not possible using traditional slimming methods. (And which were indeed impossible as recently as 5 years ago, when this amazing technology did not exist.)

Losses of 2 to 3 centimeters around the waist in 45 minutes are so common that our staff consider them a daily occurrence. Given this remarkable rate of loss, just imagine how much better you could look after one single month!

All without the stress, exertion, and anxiety associated with traditional slimming methods. No pills, no diets, no exercises, no muscle-ins, no surgery. You can actually show off the results obtained the very same day! There is no bruising or scarring, and there are no needle marks to ruin your appearance!

So if you value your time (and you've already tried every thing else), come to the slimming center where results are measured in minutes — not days, weeks, or months. Zunic!

We're open Monday to Sunday, from 8 am to 8 pm. Consultations are free and are held in strictest confidence.

Zunic
slimming & body sculpting
www.zunic.com

MAKATI
752-0600 or 752-0601
LG/F Somerset Olympia
Makati Avenue, Makati

ORTIGAS
706-0980 or 706-0880
G/F ADB Avenue Corporate Center
ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center

ALABANG
771-2200 or 771-5500
G/F Riviera Hotel
Bridgeway Avenue, Alabang

QUEZON CITY
374-0900 or 374-0800
G/F Newgarage Building
Timog Avenue, Quezon City

bench/

KISSES from BENCH

FREE box of HERSHEY'S KISSES

MECHANICS / PROCEDURE :

1. For a minimum single-receipt purchase worth P500 of regular-priced items from any of the participating outlets, Lifestyle Cardholder gets a free box of Hershey's Kisses chocolates by Bench
2. A maximum of one (1) item per receipt.
3. Applicable to cash, credit card, and EPS transactions.
4. Not applicable for purchases using Gift Certificates.
5. Promo may not overlap with other existing promos unless specified.
6. Lifestyle Cardholders still get points for their purchase.
7. Not applicable on the day of the application of Lifestyle Card.

Promo period: February 7 to 14, 2009

bench/ berbench/ human Kashieca

Robinsons Supermarket

WOW!

Low, Low Prices!

February 6 - 19, 2009

Fuji Apple ₱13

Papaya ₱33

Pork Steak ₱185

Beef Cubes ₱250

Indian Mango ₱36

Cauliflower ₱85

Onion white ₱60

Cucumber ₱60

Chicken Wings ₱140

Chicken Thigh ₱135

Chicken Quarter Cut ₱133

Dalagang Cut ₱142

Mr. Potato ₱70

Mr. Potato ₱70

HOT BUY

Carp ₱28

Eveready ₱103

Eveready Black ₱113.75

Milo ₱55.75

Ensure ₱1,398

Pediasure Plus ₱1,586

Nestle ₱91

Walking ₱61

Cadbury ₱540

Pamela ₱210

Smint ₱23.50

Samba ₱39.50

All Gold ₱50

Smint ₱23.50

Cadbury ₱540

CDO ₱15.50

Ajinomoto ₱23

Pamela ₱431.25

CDO ₱20

Nestle ₱151.25

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El Fuerte ₱170.25

Regent ₱50

Regent ₱58.25

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CDO ₱144

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Smile ₱67.75

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Myra E ₱98.75

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Champion ₱209

APPLE TAG SPECIALS

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Zesto ₱88

Knorr Soup ₱36

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http://www.robinsons-supermarket.com.ph

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

Hip bags celebrities love

STYLE IS IN THE BAG AT SM as it showcases the iconic Chinese Laundry brand in its stores.

Starting out as a collection of fashion-forward footwear for young women in 1981, Chinese Laundry has attracted a growing number of celebrities—Paris Hilton, Hilary Duff, Courtney Cox, Kelly Clarkson and Jennifer Love Hewitt.

Chinese Laundry's bag collection complements its trendy shoe brand. There are hip and fashionable bags that don't break the budget—from classic totes to today's "it" structured bags and hot clutches.

Chinese Laundry bags are available at the Ladies Boutique and Bags department of SM stores in Dumaguete, Bicutan and Mall of Asia.

INDIGO structured bag

CLUTCH with wooden handle

DOUBLE-PURPOSE tan faux animal-skin shoulder bag transforms into a shopper bag for maximum storage.

HAUTE cross clutch with metal buckle accent

BLACK chain shoulder bag that doubles as a handbag for extra space

BLUE shoulder bag, with woven handles and double straps, which can expand to carry your extra load

Watch them perform LIVE for the first time in the Philippines!

THE NORTHWING at SM city cebu

Feb 12 | 6PM | The Atrium Northwing, SM City Cebu

SM MALL OF ASIA

Feb 13 | 7PM | Entertainment Mall Seaside Boulevard, Mall of Asia Complex

SM city north edsa

Feb 14 | 5PM | Atrium, The Block SM City North Edsa

MEGAMALL

Feb 15 | 7:30PM | Mega Atrium SM Megamall

Music Management Intl.

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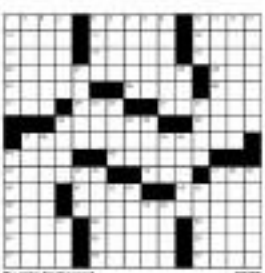
YUUOK BY MARK COLL

RIKO MACHINE BY MARK ADRIN

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

By John Underwood
New York, NY



ACROSS
1 Dutch bull
5 Who's worth a lease
10 Rue the Rockies
14 Eat from end
15 Sundance's Sheila
16 No room at the inn
17 Money maintain
18 Dwight Eisenhower
20 Zoned square
21 Basketball sensational kids
24 Nuclear mark
25 Physicists' meeting
30 Jamaica
31 Lit
32 Lackawanna
33 Bull
34 Soup bowls
35 "I love Paris" singer
36 Dishonesty
37 Bridge-crossed residence
41 Indecisiveness
42 Nonsense
43 Bag
44 Set in motion
45 Work of Rodin
47 Zone
48 Inconvenience
50 I say it!
51 Sacred vessels
54 Talk station
56 Mixed round
57 Declaratory
58 Mathematician's
60 Relative from
61 Like beginners
64 Endless
65 Pathological
66 Locksmith's
67 Supreme land
68 Legal manner
69 Photo session
70 Tie tie

DOWN
1 Dressmaker
2 Oldsmobile
3 Deeper
4 Trampoline
5 Young
6 Aging car
7 Bad whistle
8 Bedtime dream
9 Work in soap
10 Theater section
11 Sounds of disappointment
12 Breeds and pens
13 Webster, to his
19 Into national security
21 Wreckers
22 DNA shape
23 Bowling ally
25 Tell-all awards
26 Rotten status
27 Star solutions
28 Hyperbole
29 Final Four athlete
31 Possessive
36 Dublin dudes
38 Rugged
39 Nasdaq, NSN
40 Whole Foods rival
42 Resident
44 Rockies, to
45 Irrational
47 Enlisted
48 Cannot profess
49 Ender
50 Part of a home
52 Room apart
53 Forbidden
55 "A LOT"
59 Hypnogram
60 Collects
61 Pilot's turning
62 Off-color
63 Purse

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

3		2			4			
	5	7		1			6	
					8			1
						1	2	4
5	9	3						
9			6			5	7	
	2			4				9
			1			3		

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

3	7	1	2	8	4	6	5	9
2	9	5	6	1	3	4	8	7
8	6	4	9	5	7	3	2	1
4	2	6	7	8	9	5	1	3
5	1	8	3	4	6	7	9	2
9	3	7	1	2	5	8	6	4
7	8	9	5	3	1	2	4	6
6	5	3	4	9	2	1	7	8
1	4	2	8	7	6	9	3	5

How to look fresh and young for the prom

FROM NIGHT IS ONE OF the most memorable occasions in a girl's life. Which is why, along with finding the perfect dress, deciding on the hair and making-up combination, your look is of great importance.

Before you decide to pile on layers of cloth, heavy makeup, draw inspiration from Claire Danes' red-carpet celebrity beauties, who prefer to wrap the red carpet with camera-ready beautiful makeup.

Kelly Mica, Deputy editor of this week

Defined brows

Dark, thick eyebrows add definition to the face while beautifully framing the eyes. They balance well with a touch of color on the cheeks and cherry-red lips.

Celebrity inspiration: Emma Watson

Lush lashes

Long, thick eyelashes open up the eyes and make them sparkle. Keep your lashes up the whole night by curling them before applying mascara. Or add some false eyelashes to really make an impact.

Celebrity inspiration: Rachel Bilson

Shiny gloss

Adding some color to your cheeks can make you look fresh and blooming. But to, remember to keep the rest of your makeup neutral, or you might end up looking clownish.

Celebrity inspiration: Rachel Bilson

Ditch the tight 'do—big, sexy curls are the way to go

with black eyeliner. Line your eyes with a bright blue color (navy also looks good). It draws attention to your eyes while keeping your look fun and vibrant.

Celebrity inspiration: Kate Bosworth

Bold waves

Tight up-dos are so out. These days, hair is all about volume and curliness. Big, sexy curls make you look effortlessly glamorous at a formal event.

Celebrity inspiration: Leighton Meester

LEIGHTON Meester

RACHEL Bilson

EMMA Watson

KATE Bosworth

BLAKE Lively

Fringe benefits

FOR THE FIRST TIME in years, I seriously don't know what to do with my hair. Perhaps this is because I've used practically every style, trick, and trend in the book. From a cool Rose-inspired digital perm to a Harper-inspired crop, and, later on, a channeling-Anne Hathaw-both-ing-Hazel hair grow through so many changes (including a brief time with an "updated" mullet) that just I'm stumped as to what my next move should be.

(As for mid-mullet, my advice is to never close at this style by all means.)

Between avoiding prom-New Year's-dates-and-deciding-to-grow-my-hair-long-once-again, I've come to a consensus: to snip or not to snip? Make like Rihanna, or copy Lindsay's lush locks?

If you're torn from Rihanna-like fro, there are many options to try without drastically cutting length (which, in my case, takes forever to achieve). The following should tide you over until you decide to take the point-first plunge:

Try bangs. I've said this time and again: Bangs are my obsession-makeover move. Not only do they instantly update one's look without disrupting the power-at-hair equilibrium, they're also perfect when you're lazy to put on makeup, since a good fringe—whether blunt or side-swept—is pre-remarkably stylish.

Pharrel Chua, Beauty in the city desk

To cut them yourself, make sure hair is dry (wet hair looks longer, and "shrinks" once dry). Using the sharpest scissors you can find and holding them to the diagonal, carefully snip 1/16 of an inch from the edge.

The trick here is to do this in small sections to avoid mishaps. Continue shearing until you reach the desired length, ideally up to eyebrows or slightly below them.

Experiment with layers. Multi-layered styles have evolved from the bouncy Jennifer Aniston bob of the '90s to its not-puffy versions, as seen on the actress and many celebrities these days.

A classic layered look that dictates strands along the crown, gradually increasing in length to-ward the nape. This gives hair natural volume, and, surprisingly, looks great when you dress-you-and condition the night before and style-dept-in strands come morning. Un-of-pens-tion: I've gone for a (semi-ex-cluive Hillary Clinton-esque cut, which is deliciously hands-free and wash-and-wear.)

Enjoy color. It's stunning how a simple wash of hair dye can make skin glow. Highlight facial features and, most importantly, breathe life into lackluster locks. Look-how-to salons at The Fort is at the top of my list to visit the minute I hit Philippine shores. I've seen people go from drab to fab with the right highlights, lowlights, or shine-boosting color treatment.

Geoberth, in-house Goame-of-love and tresses contributor Jeane Evangelista used to say, "You have to try everything, even if it involves edges you-nanosa."

Like lipstick—if you don't like it, switch to another one. You can always go back to the point-and-have your cut or color retouched. Reputable salons give you the option to come in for free. If you're dissatisfied with what you get the first time around, it's-a date. Unless Sabu for this.)

KEEP IN MIND: Bangs before taking the plunge

Contributor Jeane Evangelista

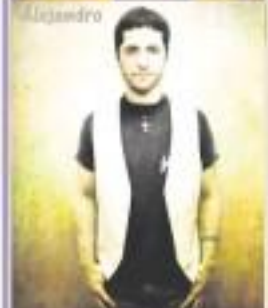
And if it's really, really bad, there are a multitude of hair accessories, clips and pins you can try—like those inspiration clips on accessories from Marcella that attach to a ponytail—while waiting for strands to grow back.

Marie Claire is the former beauty editor of Cosmopolitan, Seventeen, and Old Magazine Philippines. Mail Style@mail.com.

Boyce Avenue Live In The Philippines!

Steve

Paulo



Alejandro

Fabian

Catch-key love and music with Boyce Avenue as their very first performance in Mundial Watch them perform live on FEB 12 at 6PM in SM Cebu, FEB 13, 7PM at the Seaside Boulevard, SM Mall of Asia, FEB 14 at 9PM at The Block, SM City North Edsa and FEB 15 at 7:30PM at the Mega Atrium, SM Megamall. Fall in love with the boys from the popular Florida-based band Boyce Avenue as they perform their harmony-filled rock hits for you and your special someone this Valentine's Day.

Long before becoming one of America's hottest bands, best-friend brothers Alejandro, Fabian, and Daniel Manzano made their first public appearance at their high school where they performed for an audience of over 300 at a Pilot View High School prom. For a while, Fabian would be separate as Fabian went to pursue an Architecture degree at the University of Florida while Daniel, eldest of the Manzano brothers went to attend Harvard Law School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was not until when Daniel graduated that law school and relocated to Florida as the band's bassist that Boyce Avenue returned to the music scene. There, Ali, lead vocalist Alejandro joined guitarist Fabian at the University of Florida and started writing their first original song, Find Me.

It was with the assistance of drummer and (good) friend, Stephen Kellner that the band got to improve their signature sound by playing in several venues such as Mariner Green and Side Bar. Stephen Kellner then formally joined the group as its full-time drummer months after. By October 2006, the boys found themselves recording their first three singles at Mickie-Lee Drive Studios. The following year, the band took a break from live performances to write, produce and record additional singles for the completion of their debut album. Despite it all, the long hiatus didn't stop the band from keeping the 4th All Time Most Subscribed Musicians in Youtube. With over 3 million hits and views, this Youtube sensation has won the hearts of music lovers everywhere.

Last March 2008, Boyce Avenue released their much-awaited debut album, Titled All You're Meant to Be. It features the band's most requested tunes like Find Me, How We Now, Dare to Believe, Tonight, and many more. Check out YouTube and iTunes for covers of their songs. Be on February 12, 13, 14 & 15, catch the Boyce Avenue perform live! FREE concert performances brought to you SM Cebu, SM Mall of Asia, SM North Edsa and SM Megamall. Many thanks to our media partners, Wave 89.1, Magic 89.9, MYX 92.3 and MTV Philippines.

From eye shadow to lipstick, the right color for you

MOST OF THE questions I get via e-mail are either about skin care or makeup. Here are three seemingly frequent makeup dilemmas:

Q: I want to start using eye shadow. What colors should I buy?

A. It is good to start with neutral earth shades like brown. The newest collection of Chanel, called Bohemian Fantasy has the most amazing and versatile shades. The four colors include a deep brown that will instantly define the cutout on your eye, translucent nude pink for day time hours on your crease and eyebrow to make it look clean, silver for the inner corner of your eyes, and a great silky bronze for your lids.

Visit the counter at Rustan's in the Chanel girls can teach you how to apply eye makeup properly and even find the best shade for you.

Q: What's a good eye makeup remover?

A: There are a lot of good eye makeup removers but I am partial to Lancome's Bi Facil. It takes away all traces of eye makeup without my having to rub them off. It also doesn't make my eyes hurt or my vision cloudy when using, which many eye makeup removers do. The price is also very reasonable.

An allergist, before buying a product, visit the counter and try it first.

Q: I like nude-colored lipsticks. Any recommendations?

A: Since nude lippie shades are very dependent on your skin tone, I would recommend you go to your fave makeup counter and try the shades you like.

Having said that, why not give Stacy Bronson's Sue Light Liquid lippie a try? I've been wearing them around town all day and night. What's great about them is they're more like stained glass so the colour is not too heavy. There's also a mirror stuck to the cap, and it lights up when opened, so I am happy even when inside a dark restaurant. Mind you, it is not considered legible to touch up your lips when at a table. And for $345, this is more than a steal!

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisca-Prieto

Nude lippie shades are very dependent on your skin tone

Sneak peek

By Bianca Fernandez
Contributor

Fashion philosophy: "Don't be too serious."

Handbag style: "The bigger the better. I carry so much stuff, so I need something functional."

Buy: Mom's bag.

What's in her bag?
Christian Mariotti: "Makes you really look like you have false lashes!"

Mid LipGloss "My Favorite!"

Rose Bronze: "It's the only blush I use because it looks more natural."

Wallet: A gift. "I won't change it until it gets destroyed!"

Body Shop Shea Body Butter

Kelyndel Villar, Student

The right eye makeup for your face

Use shades that blend naturally

EVERY WOMAN WILL FIND a definite eye liner in her appearance.

If you apply makeup properly, these flaws can be corrected and transformed into advantages. It's essential to know how to apply makeup to your benefit. It will help you emphasize your natural beauty.

Depending on the shape of your eyes, you can choose different colors and ways of applying eye makeup to bring them to their full potential.

Isabel Rosos, Marketing Head

Deep-set eyes

If you have deep-set eyes, choose light eye shadows from one of eye shadows to help make your eyes appear bigger. Apply light eye shadows on your eyelid from the inner corners of your eye to the outer and a bit further. Light colors should be applied to the middle of the lid, and darker colors on and just above the outer line. Blend the darker shade up and out.

Wide-set eyes

You can visually reduce the range between your eyes if you apply a darker shade of eye shadow from the outer corner of your eye to the middle of the eyelid. Apply a lighter eye shadow from the middle of your eyelid to the inner corner of your eye. Blend in different shades in the middle of the eyelid.

Close-set eyes

Close-set eyes are those with a distance narrower than one eye width. Apply some concealer on the inner corners of both eyes. Using an eyeliner, draw a very thin line along the upper eyelashes to that they become thicker near the outer corner of your eyes. Apply a very thin line of light eye shadow from the inner corner of your eye to the middle of your eyelid. Then apply eye shadow of darker hues, extending from the middle of your eyelid to the outer corner. Blend the colors in the middle of the eyelids. Do more mascara on the outer corners.

Downturned eyes

Shade eye shadows up and out. Apply eyeliner close to the upper lash line and then blend in the shadow along the eyelet line on the outer two-thirds of the eyes. In order to visually lift the eyes, apply citrus mascara.

Asian eyes

Apply light eye shadow on your eyelids. Use a pencil to make a thick smoky line along upper eyelashes that is dense enough to be seen well when your eyes are open). Under the lower eyelashes, draw a thinner line. In order to make your eyes visually wider, apply brown eye shadow on your eyebrows. Gives your eyelashes with two or three layers of dense mascara.

For those wearing glasses

If the frame of your glasses is bright, it is not necessary would color with eye shadow. Better pay attention to your eyebrows and just the corner on them. If you usually prefer brown pastels, try a black one. To give your eyelash more depth, use a dense mascara and apply it from the inner to the tips. Those wearing contacts or tinted-tinted glasses should find those to contrast the shape of the eyebrows and color them if necessary. It's important that your eyebrows and eyes determine your face, not the glasses.

To achieve big-looking eyes

Shadows of dark shades make your eyes visually smaller and deepest, while light hues make them appear bigger and wider. If you want to focus on the effect of big, beautiful eyes, choose light eye shadows. Apply eye shadow only to the peripheries of eye pencil or any other kind of eyeliner it would make your look softer and dreamier. If you want to make your eyes look more dramatic, apply eyeliner after the application of eye shadow. Then coat your eyelashes to add shape and flutter your eye makeup with a layer of mascara. It would more volume to your eyelashes and make them appear bigger, as in dream sequences.

Never line the lower edge of the lower eyelashes, as it will make your eyes visually smaller.

For the special, makeup artist Karen Arevalo's recommendation is simply apt to enhance Melissa's features. Some tips and hints she shared:

"The look is simple drama. Melissa's smoky eyes are the center of attention. I balanced the face by keeping the lips subtle. That's why the face at the ideal but the other features do not take away from the main focus. You can see how the women's best features are spotlighted.

"Eyes are an area where you can easily have fun and be creative. Even more needed by defining, subtle to high-drama.

"The basic idea is to choose complementary colors in three intensities: light for highlighting, medium for the lower half of the eyelid, and dark to be used at the lash line to liner. It's important to stay within the same color range. The most fundamental lesson about eye color is to use colors or shades that blend naturally, invisibly."

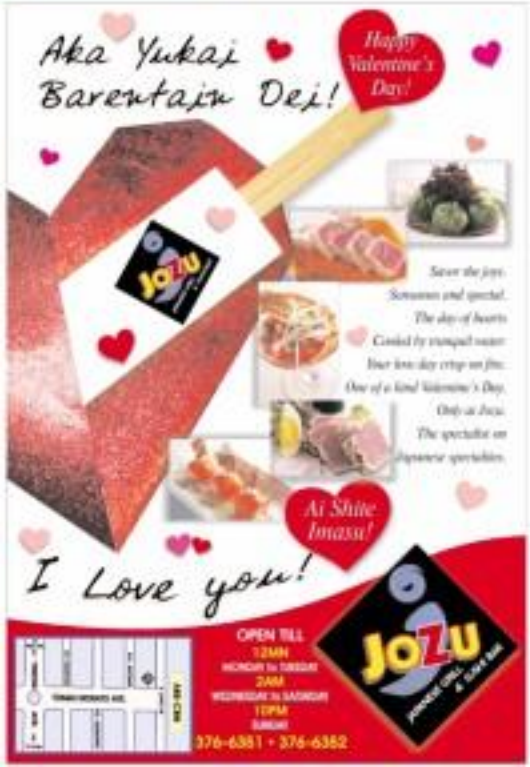
Expert tips

Makeup pro Jean Soria, Patrick Ryan and Chanel Jones also share the following tips:

Jean Soria: "Great eyeliner tip: Dark shades recede and light shades come forward. Darken where you want to contour and lighten where you want to highlight."

Patrick Ryan: "Smile and capture the glow in your eyes, so you can follow your imagination for your desired eye shadow design."

Chantal Jones: "Avoid using dark colors if you do not know how to blend the colors well. This will make you look tired and messy. It's better to use either skin-tone colors or a shade lighter than your eyelid color. This will open up your eyes. You can open your eyes more by curling your lashes and applying waterproof mascara."



YOUR eyes determine your eye makeup.

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

Nothing says it like jewels

CARLA Accessories opal earrings

ON DENNIS: Black polo from Black Label Heavens; necklace and bracelet from Pianegonda Silver in Progress collection; Cartier Roadster watch. On Annelle: Floral dress from Vivienne Tam; earrings, bangles and ring from Roberto Cole Fantasia collection; watch by Piaget Paulan

IN CELEBRATION OF VALENTINE'S Day, Rustan's Silver Vault presents a fine array of precious jewelry and timepieces that enchant in this season of romance.

To complete a man's dapper look are classic timepieces like Ernst Benz Chronic Lunar, Bel Aloni Blues Tone Walker and Cartier's Baloo Blue. There are also classic bracelets from Pianegonda's Deep and Allegri collections and necklaces from its Silver in Progress line.

NOTEBOOK S4

DRESS by David Meinoc; earrings, long necklace and short necklace from Roberto Cole Of Cebu Silver; Mellow ring from Roberto Cole Caress Collection; Roberto Cole Cappucino bracelet from Caress Collection

NOAH Barcelona rope with diamond earrings

PIANEGONDA 18k with Pearl necklace

BANANA Republic Beijing Bulb necklace

CARLA Accessories pink opal ring

CARLA Accessories moonstone ring

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Love... makes you feel special

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Shop at Rustan's from January 28 to February 28, 2009 for your chance to win any of these heartwarming prizes:

- Re-run of the LTA India version of a weekend package at the Shangri-La Boracay Resort and Spa starring in April 2009
- 50% or 30K Certificate for a romantic dinner for 2 at Cuisine Evening Cafe at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel
- Experience Heaven On The Sit with any of 10 Gift certificates for wellness treatments at Clarins, Germaine de Capuccini or Rustan's Makati, 5th Level

A minimum P3,000 single-receipt purchase is all it takes to experience your way back to love and romance. So join now!

February 14 is Valentine's Day

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GORGEOUS owners of The Terrace at Sen. Gerardo M. Garcia, Cynthia and Ivy Alexandra, chef Eusebio Yanuel, Marlon B. Zobel, Ching Cruz and Mimchie Soriano, with guest of honor Sen. Loren Legarda (Ellen Ivan left)

SPECIAL guests leading the cutting of the ribbon: Bale's fashion czar Pitoy Moreno, (sec. from R) Rosa Prieto-Valdez, guests of honor Sen. Loren Legarda and Makati Rep. Teddy Boy Locsin Jr., and standee Lesley Tan

TRAVELIFE editor in chief Lia Ilarde, gorgeous pals Stephanie Zobel and Alexandra Rosal, and entrepreneur Elbert Cuenca

7 friends open a restaurant in Greenbelt 5

MA Berrones, Susan Jarvis and Margarita Delgado (standing) Marichu Soriano and me

WITH RESTAURANTS THAT COME and go in our town, this one is sure to stay, darlings. It's the newest dining destination called The Terrace at 5th.

Seven super pals from way back and best consuwomans alike... reigning That chef of Silik Castillo Tunsad, with women of substance Ching Cruz, Marichu Zobel, Rhandia Soriano, Carol Garcia, and brilliant interior designers Ivy and Cynthia Alcantara... are behind this restaurant, which is a non-winner.

After a three weeks-long soft opening (which was full everyday for lunch and dinner, pahengasi), The Terrace at 5th was opened to Manila's elite essentials with chilled Moët & Chandon frosting in the delight of 200 invitees. Thanks to the superwoman that put Hennessey and Moët & Chandon in the country's social scene—Ofelia Azarcon, chief representative of Moët Hennessey Asia-Pacific Philippines.

Before the formal opening, we nibbled on a variety of hors d'oeuvres, shrimp Cocktail and servings of Prime Angus Beef, while others ordered their favorite steak straight from the menu card.

You must check out the incredibly delightful dishes that have been perfected in the hearts of its owners for years, darlings. Previously served only to the privileged ones who have dined in their homes, these dishes were especially selected by our town's food lovers to enjoy, like Cymbium Amadeiy Artichoke Dip served with tortilla toasts or tortilla chips and Provolone con Chamizhal served with garlic bread. I (and I was not alone) loved Marietta J's Laing Pasta a la Crioloise with white shrimps. Terrace's signature salad, chef's pride Home-style Confit of Pork Belly and USDA Prime Angus and BBQ-lyn Steak served with the saucer of the original demi Peter Lugay, imported from Brooklyn, on toss, and the 1,000-g Bonebroose or Fillet Mignon.

This is just the tip of the iceberg, darlings, of what one can have at The Terrace. You can also order a glass of wine from their wine cellar or ask for the super chilled Moët or Chandon Brut Imperial on a generous price of P5,950 until the end of February. You're in for the perfect dining experience, pahengga, as the ground floor of Greenbelt 5.

Call 7266886, 7266860; text 0917-8276868; or e-mail terrace@ladp.com.ph for reservations.

Prolific young artist

The young pretty as a picture girl who a decade ago was celebrated as a child prodigy is now a full-grown lady. She's a granddaughter of Amelia Lopez, super talented Anna de Asis Bember, who graduated magna cum laude from Boston University. And after a number of martial arts in Cavite temple Ester Chrisa, Anna came home to be with her family and reconnect with her heritage.

Proud parents, retired businessman Jody Bember and his wife, woman of substance, brilliant Joanne de Asis, planned a small party for her close pals and to preview Anna's latest artworks, darlings. The chosen invitees were amazed by the range, expressiveness and sense of her works. Almost Leyas commented, "She has evolved... She is prolific and energetic."

Inside Ely Gamo owned in an "Encounters." Ann Achaval Pineyro (an artist herself) appreciated the exciting edge. "Females," a colorful that escapes "Inside" here in oil. Lawyer Lira Ayanna Manese lavished to early to assure her red dot on "Resonance."

Mark and Stephanie Brandson and the gorgeous Vicky Zobel were captivated by the Philippine scenes, which Anna painted during her travels up north in 2004. The removable, wire sage Washington Syrup laser all there to the parish, when he quietly chose "Mist Balinao" while the Pendolons opted for "Spring Lakay."

Adorable Vivana Funes chose Anna's vintage "Animals and Angels," while sister Margarita, who enjoyed the event as an exhibitor, got "Salal" because "it caught my eye immediately a day before, when I went over on survey the place."

The household and neighborhood staff were all thrilled to have a photo-op with the dazzling diamond star Sharlet Gutiano, who came to pick the painting "Women Issues" for her new condo.

In short, there was something for everyone on the walls—and not to be, darlings, they sold like hotcakes!

After the invitees left with their favorite boys, mega artists Dan Albar, Randy Santiago, Gig de Pio and Jun gathered around Baby Jones and her clan with sketch pads and glasses of wine: charting and sketching.

BEAUTIFUL Sonia Maria Lobregas and his mother Marie Manzo

SISTERS Bianca and Natalia Zobel

HANDS Maria Florinda, Ray and Ila Dumpoy

JAMES de Jesus, Tina Rodriguez, Alex Rodriguez, and Carol and Ron Jorge

Gil and Mary Rose Aquino

GLAM girl Wendy Pagas

MIKE Sandoval, Irene Marcos-Araneta and Francis Cruz

LEIGH Cuspo, Tessa Prieto-Valdes and Vicky Zobel

LAWYERS Roberto P. Lucero, president of Lyceum of the Philippines Manila and Cavite campuses, and Peter Laurel, Lyceum president of Batangas and Laguna campuses

MIGUEL Concepcion with the beautiful Lorna P. Laurel

GERHARD Kropp, Philippine Hoteliers Inc., president and regional VP of Dusit International, and Rizalyn P. Lucero

ALL in the family: Sara with her father, retired businessman Jody Bember, young artist of the hour Jana; her aunt Helena Bember; and Joanne de Asis Bember, senior adviser for a private company

TEEEER Ily Cesares-Sison of "Rhythm in Heart"

TATLER'S Jenna Sun Diego in front of "Sparkled"

Dusit and Lyceum tie-up

That model class came belonging in town of hotels and resorts, Dusit Thani, has now added another jewel to its crown of success stories. The latest is Dusit Thani Public Company Limited, which has signed an agreement with Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU)—my alma mater, where I graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Foreign Service degree—to offer Dusit Thani College's super popular courses in Tourism, Hospitality Management, to the four campuses of LPU in the Philippines, pahengga.

Under the agreement, Dusit Thani College will provide the curricula and academic resource materials for the Bachelor of Science in International Hospitality Administration specializing in Hotel and Restaurant Management programs and Culinary Arts and Tourism Management including Dusit Thani College's famous Professional Chef and Culinary Arts program in LPU's four campuses located in Manila, Batangas, Laguna and Cavite, pahengga.

The good news, darlings, is Dusit has major plans to recruit a few thousand more staff and employees from the Philippines for several new their international hotel openings in the Middle East over the next five years. Hay, not bad, huh?

A learning center will be constructed at the Intramuros campus with fully equipped class and training rooms, plus loads of other modern facilities for only 20 M.

Roberto P. Laurel, president of the Manila and Cavite campuses, and Peter Laurel, president of the Batangas and Laguna campuses, both said the Lyceum Group "looks forward to working for the realization of the objectives of our agreement and we are delighted to have Dusit Thani as our partner for excellence in Hospitality Education in the Philippines."

(Gig) Dingcong and Criselda Montano

ART LOVERS Maria Soriano and Basil Dayrit front of "Miss Bulacan"

La Prairie bucks the financial crunch with new caviar and diamond face cream

By Melanie J. Cosme
Contributor

THE LATEST LIMITED-edition cure? Maybe not. It's a new pair of five-inch-high platinum heels? Pass. How about an anti-aging cream? A definite yes.

With the recent financial crisis, women all over the world may be shopping less, but not where their face is concerned. Many are still not above splurging a five-figure sum for the latest anti-aging product.

In an elaborate caviar-themed dinner at W Hotel in Hong Kong, La Prairie gave a peek at the latest extension to its signature Caviar collection, Skin Caviar Crystalline Concentrate. It's priced about $10K (approximately P522,000)—an over-the-top price tag that isn't as surprising, especially in La Prairie devotees who buy two to three creams just at a time.

Call it the "Lipstick Effect," and this may be the reason the beauty industry has yet to feel the effects of the economic slump.

In a recent report in the Telegraph Magazine, economists gave the theory that during hard times, people give up on extravagant purchases such as cars, and indulge in small luxuries such as makeup and beauty products.

Recent sales figures from some of the world's biggest cosmetic companies bared this theory. According to Louise Richards, international public relations director for La Prairie, "Our customers are some of the most discerning women in the world. For them, it's about putting your best face forward.

LA PRAIRIE'S Skin Caviar Crystalline Concentrate boasts of tiny beads anti-aging ingredients and caviar extracts to refirm and re-ignite luminosity in the skin.

LA PRAIRIE International Public Relations director Louise Richards

PROFESSOR Sven Gohla, La Prairie vice president for research and development

Whatever the economy, investing in skincare is part of our lifestyle."

Rare ingredients

Companies like La Prairie justify their high price tags by using rare and precious ingredients, and by investing millions in research and development. Skin Caviar Crystalline Concentrate is formulated with the latest anti-aging ingredients and caviar extracts to rebuild, replenish, replenish, refirm and re-ignite luminosity within the skin, according to perfumer Sven Gohla, La Prairie's vice president for Research and Development.

Designed to be worn alone or under any La Prairie moisturizer, Skin Caviar Crystalline Concentrate is akin to a lotion in a bottle, helping to relax and increase the volume of skin. "Whenever we launch a new product, it must be the very best, most luxurious skin treatment money can buy, the best that science can create," adds Richards.

Skin Caviar Crystalline Concentrate features La Prairie's exclusive cellular Complex, which helps stimulate the skin's natural repair process. It also incorporates caviar extract, claimed to help speed up the natural production of collagen, and encourages firmer, younger-looking skin.

Other key ingredients include high-tech peptides, amino acids, RNAs and plant extracts such as licorice and seaweed plus to deliver an advanced, anti-wrinkle, brightening and firming effect; glycolic and lactic acids to increase cell turnover; and liquid crystals, mica and diamond powder to reflect and scatter light. "It lends a luminous, glowing effect on the skin," says Gohla.

Though it may seem vulgar to pamper your skin with diamonds and caviar at a time when people are losing their jobs and homes, applying such products gives one that feeling of indulgence without necessarily having to Bauer it. And like a diamond, your face is also forever. Designer Coco Chanel said it best, "Nature gives you the face you have at 20; it is up to you to mind the face you have at 50."

La Prairie Skin Caviar Crystalline Concentrate will be available this month at Rustan's Makati.

The author is editor in chief of Look Magazine, the beauty-fashion glossy of Hinge Inquirer Publications.

LAUNCH caviar-themed dinner at top W Hotel in Hong Kong

Alcuaz works to be authenticated

CALVIN JOAQUIN MARK DEY. P. ELIZABETH ST. and Montessori Law, Ashbrook Hills, San Juan) will hold an authentication session of the works of Federico Aguilar Alcuaz on Feb. 8, 2-4 p.m. Critic Reuben Ramos Gallardo will also lecture on Alcuaz's art at 3:30 p.m. In 1961 in Paris, he was awarded the Diploma of Honor at the International Exhibition of Art. Later, Honor also awarded the decoration of Arts, Letters and Sciences from the French government and the Order of French Legion of Honor in 1963. In 2007, he was granted the Presidential Medal of Merit by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo for his outstanding accomplishments in the field of visual arts. Call 7338053, 7230818.

UST launches Philippine medicine history book

The Miguel de Benavides Library (Central Library) of the University of Santo Tomas will formally launch the book "Proceedings of the First International Conference on the History of Medicine in the Philippines" today, 4 p.m., at the library's conference hall. UST Lanzaron, Espana, Manila. Edited by UST project of libraries, Fr. Angel Aparicio, OP, the book contains all the papers read during the international conference on Philippine medicine history sponsored by the UST Library with the UST Faculty of Medicine and Surgery in 2007 at the Antonio Rivera de Rosario Heritage Section of the UST Miguel de Benavides Library. The publication of the book is supported by the Spanish Agency for Cultural Cooperation. UST Rector Magnificus Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa will deliver a congratulatory message. The book launch is open to the public. Call 7313034 or 4061611 loc. 8234.

Korean art educator at Museo Pambata

Museo Pambata invites aspiring artists and young

GOINGS ON

sculptors to join Korean professor Pil Kyu Choi on Feb. 7, 10 a.m. and Feb. 10 and 12, 2 p.m., at the museum's Kanpalan Hall. Learn printmaking, paper rolling, "ttojil," clay modeling techniques and other Korean arts and crafts. Also featured is the clay animation workshop. Workshops are free with museum admission. Call 527-1797-98, 5260595; e-mail info@museopambata.org.

Writers' festival

The National Commission on Culture and the Arts, Filipinas Institute of Translation Inc., Lithaan (UP Institute of Creative Writing), and Ateneo de Manila University will hold Iskrayb: The first Philippine Writers Festival 2009 on Feb. 11-13. The festival will gather around a hundred young and senior writers who have been recipients of grants from the NCCA and other local institutions are making their mark on Philippine literature. Call 9231699.

Info specialists' seminar

In cooperation with the Integrated Society of Information Professionals, the Philippine Society of Librarians and Information Specialists will hold a seminar on Formulating The Information Professionals' Role in a Global Perspective on March 2-4 at New Hotel, 45 Bagong Bayan St., Talisay Bldg., near Session Road, Baguio City. Call (0917-8064357, 0919-4475726, 0915-2160882; 6683864.

Culinary events

Enderun Colleges' Food Lovers Program is hosting a series of classes this February that will merge essential cooking theories and practical techniques. On Feb. 7, chef Markus Glocker will teach Southern France's traditional dishes. On Feb. 21, chef Vanessa Concepcion will teach it right. In Makan Rice on Feb. 28, chef Gan Cheong Yin will teach Malaysian cuisine. Call 658-5000.

MOST INNOVATIVE PRODUCT CONCEPT

FitFlop, the workout-while-you-work flip-flop, was recently named the Most Innovative Product Concept by the Coles Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc., as the recent Beauty, Health and Wellness Show 2008 in Ayala Center Cebu. Present were Michael Reardon, creator and exhibit chair; Melanie Ng, treasurer; Jay Vasallo, VP for business and door chair; Melody Matos, brand associate; Edward Salazar, president; Apolo Enriquez, trustee. FitFlop is available in Bo Tien Run, Shoe Salon, The Spa, MOA and Rockpark.

Hot Hearts Valentine @ Sofitel

Evening Latin melodies and steamy salsa moves... Sensual culinary masterpieces... Romantic, well-appointed accommodation... Make the roaring memories of Sofitel Philippine Plaza's Hot Hearts Valentine

February 14, 2009, Saturday

Dinner
Share extravagance on the open buffet with special appearances of hot hearts and cool temptations and indulge this winter.

Sweet Pair
Sweet, fussy and romantic, your way to love under the stars with the Sunsets Area. Spicy grills and savory dips on the buffet are perfect for tables for two to family or close friends celebrations.

Lobby
Surrender to sweet and romantic dreams as you embark on lovers' days by Sofitel and indulge on scrumptious sweets like Cupid chocolate cakes.

Fitness Area
Thrill to sensational moves and sensuous dances as Latin melodies, Philippine Electric Love evening with a live band fill the Hot Hearts Celebration in Pool February 12 to 13, 2009.

Hot Valentine celebration at Pool cocktail happenings at Sports and Sunset Bar also February 12 (Poolside) and February 13 (Indoor).

Reservations recommended, please call 551 99 99 ext. 1108 or 832 68 68 or email fitness.center@sofitelphilippines.com

Reach For Romance
Share sensual moments with your loved one with exclusive deals this winter only at February 14, 15 and 16, 2009.

Romance
- Accommodation for two + choice of breakfast
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- Late check out until 4PM (subject to room availability)
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For reservations, please call 551 99 99 ext. 1108 or 832 68 68 or email fitness.center@sofitelphilippines.com

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CATULA Amorcito moonstone earrings

NOR-H Barcelona yellow gold necklace with golden rhinestud pendant

Nothing says it like jewels

PIAGET20P804 Eternity ring

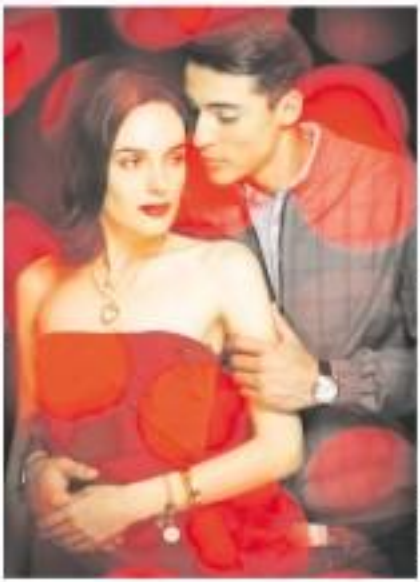
From page 61

More classics come from Tiffany & Co. with its staple, all-occasion Grey Titanium bracelet. Damiani's premier outfitters also add to a sleek ensemble.

Tamara Comolli continues to play with the best precious gems to enhance a woman's true beauty. Carla Amorim's rings and earrings of tulips and a thousand leaves make for sultry pieces that complement a glamorous dress.

All brands are available at Fully Ltd's Makati (tel. 813 0278), Shangri-La Plaza Mall (6339636), Gateway (9112487), Robinsons Place (554 2788), Alabang Town Center (8505532) and Ayala Center Cebu (032) 2315643).

SAMANA Republic Collection bangles



OLIVIER Leather wallets and silver cufflinks

SAMANA Republic neckties

ON DENNECK: Jacket from Black Label Hermine, long-sleeved shirt from James Ponsi, white gold Rolex Masterwatch with alligator strap from Carlos Grey Titanium (¥37 Tiffany & Co. bracelet, Chi Aromatic fred sandroz; Tiffany Hearts Necklace, Tiffany Hearts with Diamonds, ¥37 Bangle in gold and Charme in gold, all from Tiffany & Co.

LIFESTYLE Fashion&Beauty

One giant step in flip-flops

Patxi Elizalde and Haribon come up with a fashionista way to save rainforests

By Chechi V. Moral

TALK ABOUT GREEN TOES. Taking a step in your flip-flops is one step toward saving the country's remaining rainforests.

At Ipanema 08 Seeds collection hits stores on Feb. 18, in local distributor, Elite Commercial and Industrial Corp., an

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The New Chocolate Marble Loaf

A Delicious Surprise

Delight your family by surprising them with the Red Ribbon Chocolate Marble Loaf. Made of rich buttery pound cake and luscious chocolate swirls, every bite says how special they are to you!

Canadian diamonds make their mark

By Harriet Rey-Dy
Contributor

Opening its first diamond mine in 1998, Canada is now the world's third largest producer; its creations on exhibit at Ontario museum

TORONTO—THE GLOBAL economy may have lost its sparkle, but you can still enjoy a dazzling array of bling in the ongoing "The Nature of Diamonds" exhibit at the Royal Ontario Museum.

Long treasured for its beauty and luminosity, diamonds have always held an extraordinary place in gemological history. It has, and continues to be, a favorite symbol of love.

"Most purchases are made because of an event, tradition or ceremony," says Michelle Mees, a Toronto-based jeweler. "Diamonds help sentimentalize those events; women continue to fall in love with its brilliance and beauty."

According to Mees, engagement rings, three-stone anniversary rings, and diamond studs are three of the most popular diamond purchases.

At the Diamonds exhibit, highlights include historical pieces such as the early 19th-century Queenie Shirk necklace made by legendary French jewelry house Boucheron; a bejeweled pendant, which once owned by Catherine the Great, and a diamond-crowned Art Deco bell buckle made by Cartier, and most coveted by the Maharajahs of Indore, said to be the wealthiest men in the world in the '20s and '30s.

MILKY Way necklace by Denise Hardiner for Steinman Jewellers Vancouver, 2000 Winner of the 2000 De Beers International Award for the best use in the millennium

There are also more contemporary pieces such as Frank Gehry's exquisite diamonds in the rough necklace, and the breathtaking Milky Way necklace designed by local Toronto artist Denise Hardiner for Steinman Jewellers in Vancouver. This piece also won the De Beers Diamond International Award in 2000.

But beyond the bling, the exhibit takes visitors behind the scenes on how this precious stone is mined, and explains the special scientific properties behind its aesthetic appeal. It is comprehensive and informative, and, at times accompanied by 500 pieces of rocks, rough diamonds, and jewelry, dazzles at the same time.

The exhibit has been popular among museum-goers since it opened last October. Of particular interest is its focus on Canada's emergence as the world's third largest producer of quality diamonds. There is a special Ekati mines in the Northwest Territories in 1998. It is the country's first diamond mine.

According to Natural Resources Canada (NRC), the country's diamond industry is now worth in the range of $1.1–$2.6 billion. Canadian diamond production is an one or well, about 17.6 million carats were produced in 2007, compared to 13.2 million carats in 2006.

NRC has also put in place strong Canadian Kimberley Process Certificates to promote diamond trading from legitimate sources.

The Nature of Diamonds is organized by the American Museum of Natural History in New York in collaboration with the Royal Ontario Museum, The Field Museum in Chicago, and the Houston Museum of Natural Science. The exhibit is ongoing until March 22.

One giant step in flip-flops

From page 11

resource development project with Haribon Foundation to support the environment organization's "Habitarmacion" efforts.

Ilito managing director Francisco "Paco" Elizalde said his company will allocate a percentage of its sales revenues from the footwear collection to Haribon's "ROAD to 2020" (Habitarmacion, Organizations and Advocates) program to replant 1 million hectares of Philippine rainforests by year 2020.

"Haribon will provide a specific area in the Calauyan Watershed that will be identified for the planting of these trees," Elizalde added. "They will provide us with the seedlings, the upkeep for one year and allow us the mobilization to welcome trees."

Calauyan is one of the major areas of Haribon, a government land and watershed that provides water supply to Metro Manila.

Ipanema is a brand owned by the Brazilian company called Grendene, which has built a name in part for its environment advocacies. It also owns the footwear brands Grendha and Rider. A few years ago, it signed up Brazilian supermodel Gisele Bundchen as spokesmodel for its green projects and Gochuga as special spokesmodel line. This year, Bundchen has the CB Steels collection, and Grendene's project is reforestation.

The environment program is optional for Grendene distributors worldwide, Elizalde said, but "it's good for corporate image and the environment, which we plan to get involved in."

While Ipanema isn't entirely an environment-friendly product—it's made of PVC (polyvinyl chloride), a northern resin—"the processes in producing and the systems in terms of environment conservation that the factories are implementing are all in place," Elizalde said.

"They maybe a bit of the PVC. The water and power conservation are legendary in Brazil." The CB line is made entirely of recycled materials, he added.

Haribon could only welcome such efforts from the private sector.

"We help the government but it's difficult because they have other priorities. The environment is the least of them," lamented Mac Tiñamaco Jr. Haribon's operations group director.

"[Forest restoration] has been what we've neglected for the past 50 years. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has forgotten this part of its job and we're trying to fill this gap. That's why we'd rather work with the non-government sector. We find more interest [in] people to help the cause."

"ROAD to 2020" was triggered by the tragedy that killed 2,000 people in 2006 in General Nakar, Quezon, Tabayasan said.

In 2005, Haribon started gathering one million signatures to be a total big ban and is aiming in the remaining national forests. The organization decided to circulate the one million signatures in our million hectares of replanted land.

FRANCISCO "Paco" Elizalde

MAC Tiñamaco Jr.

Apart from Calauyan, Haribon has other areas of interests across the country. But for the Ilito project, they want to concentrate on Calauyan to remind people of the urgency of replanting the lands of its main water source.

But even with support of private agencies, replanting an area that vast seems like shooting for the moon. A hectare of land calls for 2,500 seedlings, each costing P75. Meaning, Haribon is hoping that with a few pesos from corporate backing, it can make a dent on its target.

Raising consciousness among Filipinos alone is tough.

"If you compare now to 10 years ago, it has increased tremendously, though still not as high as in other countries," Tiñamaco said. "But in context that everyone lives across to another thing... We can't do it alone. If we are to survive as a nation, everybody should push in."

In March, Ilito will hold the "Walk the Green Mile" event still in line with "ROAD to 2020." Everyone is invited to join the event will walk or ride from one point in Makati to a central meeting area, and converge for several activities like fashion shows, raffles and other party. Elizalde said they would invite representatives from other personal groups to join.

Every purchase of an Ipanema CB Steels pair will come with a certificate of donation, which the company will pass on to Haribon. The collection will be available at SM Department Store, Shoe Salon, Chardonay Clothing Company, Bed Alley, Landmark, Freeway, Planet Sports, Greenhills, Ochoco Store, 25th Avenue Square Naga, Bicol Baraday.

Individuals or companies who wish to do their own thing can buy seeds directly from Haribon's website (www.haribon.org.ph).

Haribon can plan the seeds for them or they could volunteer for the actual planting. A planting is scheduled for every 300 seedlings purchased.

SUNDOWN'S eponymous line for Ipanema supports environmental causes.

CT'LEE launches new CB Steels collection

Clothing line sticks with Filipina endorsers

By Joy Rojas
Contributor

Lea Salonga, KC Concepcion—how this Filipino brand does it

ITS STYLES may seem familiar or conventional brands, but the story of fashion retail store Bayo is as Filipino as one could get.

Bayo (Ilonggo for "dress") began as a made-to-order shop in Makati. Before long, mounting orders led it to move from Escondido to Robinsons Galleria, which housed the first of its 52 (and counting) retail outlets nationwide.

Through it all, the Bayo music has remained the same.

"The merchandise is suited for the Filipina in both fashion sense and body type," says Pinky Kintanilla, Bayo general manager. "In the past years, we have increased sizes to cater to the petite and more athletic body types. Designs and styles are made for the Filipina clients, whether they are casual or formal clothes. But we always make sure that they carry the brand's signature flair."

Proud

It only makes sense, then, that the brand finds the Filipinas picks Filipinas to model its clothes. Not just anybody, but "women who are proud to say they are Filipino and have their own individual styles and beliefs," says Kintanilla. The brand has certainly stuck to that qualification through the years, even as other clothing companies have gone on to importing their image models.

Actress, model and VJ Kat Alano was one of the first familiar faces to model the brand. Sporting a light-colored long-sleeved top and her signature wavy mane in her billboard, Alano, who was photographed hanging out in a coffee shop, was the epitome of the strong, yet sensitive Bayo girl, thanks to her carefree look and the caption "A fan of Jackie O. and Jackie Chan."

Though known for its predominantly casual pieces, Bayo took on a rich, luxe appeal when Danielle Cojiangco, the accomplished equestrian from the prominent clan, stepped in as the label's beloved. Suddenly, staples like a striped sports-collared T-shirt, which Danielle wore in her ad campaign, became upscale opposed to casual.

Years later, the brand would show its versatility when it tapped Kitchie Nadal and Bubbie Almoite as image models. The girls, both multi-talented local rock stars, produced Bayo as an edgy outfitter, thanks to the careful consideration of its recently casual coordinates.

Of course, while an endorser doesn't necessarily influence the way a new collection should look, she does influence sales.

Phenomenal

Singer and stage actress Lea Salonga's phenomenal fame abroad made her the likely choice for Bayo's "Filipino and Proud" campaign in 2004. But the actress' undeniably got more than what it bargained for.

Kintanilla recalls the time of "Miss Saigon" and "Les Miserables" "by bringing Bayo to where we are right now. She was what Richard Gomez was to them," she says, "and we are forever grateful for that. We continue to support her personal and professional endeavors any way we can."

Today, "it" actress and singer KC Concepcion has an equally arresting effect on Bayo's discriminating market. She can, says Kintanilla, "because every girl wants to be brand links up to KC in some sort of role model, and that's how we want to address the younger part of our market," KC needs little effort to sell the label she represents.

Kintanilla marvels at how all the clothes KC wears on her billboards, TV appearances, and movies sell like hotcakes "within weeks after fans see her wearing the outfit."

The brand should be enjoying that success for a while, as its endorser stays as exclusive for years. They become part of one another," says Kintanilla. "They become Bayo girls forever."

LEA SALONGA is sought Bayo international recognition.

"IT" GIRL, singer and actress-model-talented KC Concepcion effortlessly showcases the elegance, femininity and style of Bayo's collections.

Descendant of Forbes Park builder keeps work tradition

Suzette Hahn-Lopez's style reflects the ease with which she moves from the domestic to the business world

VIBRANT... red silk babydoll jacket and black drawstring tube top; Bourne Republic bike belt (at Bench stands, all from Bench)

THERE ARE STILL THOSE WHO think high-level positions are only for expats or have yet it in their heads that promotion may never come their way. Suzette Hahn-Lopez isn't one of them.

Suzette comes from a good mix of Austrian-Jewish and Filipino bloodlines. Absorbing the best of both cultures, she has the perfect blend of determination and charm.

Originally from Innsbruck, Germany, her grandfather had to flee the country during the Holocaust. He migrated to the Philippines. A master engineer, he set up Hahn Manila, a firm that helped build the Guadalupe Bridge and Forbes Park. Her father was the sole distributor of BMWs for 41 years.

Suzette relates that her father had a golden rule he had to...

Nina Silajan Go
Contributor

JESSICA curled arrow-belted knit; Wonderful Wine denim shirt (It Jeans, all from Bench)

LUV to mix yellow-gold tones: Parker pen (at Department Store), Vincenza silk necktie (same as pocket square), black-band watch, both from Bench

...ing details in the cuffs, collars and neckliner for that added flair. For sudden evening engagements, she brings a handcarry of extra clothes to the office.

Successful in both work and the home, Suzette is living her belief that a woman should always strive for personal development and growth. Looking at Suzette, with her talents and personality, one can clearly see the mark of a career woman of tremendous quality.

MC MISS Couture black jersey asymmetric dress from SM Department Store

The Working Class

Suzette's first marriage, with three kids to attend to, Suzette decided to slow down and step back from the corporate world. Opting for a more flexible work schedule so she could prioritize family and home, she became an entrepreneur and set up Gulf Fashions.

She also joined her sister-in-law to one of the largest garment-apparel exporters in the Philippines as an international merchandiser.

Today, her three girls grown-up, she has expanded her corporate world...as general manager of Beverly Hills 6750, the world-class Multi-Specialty Aesthetic Institute.

Suzette leans towards a wardrobe of black and white, although she does not...

Shifting gears

...as the biggest garment-apparel exporters in the Philippines as an international merchandiser.

Today, her three girls grown-up, she has expanded her corporate world...as general manager of Beverly Hills 6750, the world-class Multi-Specialty Aesthetic Institute.

Suzette leans towards a wardrobe of black and white, although she does not...

...as an upscale up her accessorizes style every now and then. Because she favors solids to prints, she makes sure those have interes-

Let the sale season begin

By Jake Barrera
Contributor

Bargain shopping is not only good for the soul, it helps boost the sagging economy

RECESSIONISTAS, UNITE! THE sale season has begun. Take us seat! The price wars have begun, and shoppers are enticed to part with their moolah and break their New Year's resolution not to shop early.

As early as the second day of January, full-page ads have started gracing this newspaper screaming the sale season. A rare case of those people who don't shop during Christmas season. Instead, I remain myself from buying and wait for this time of the year when all stores go on sale. As early as last week, my mobile phone has been receiving text messages from stores announcing their sales, until I just can't get away from them.

Local retailers do this never-ending sale at the first week of the year to counter the sale spike they encountered during the holidays and to get rid of last year's inventory. This is somewhat similar to the United States' Thanksgiving weekend sale or Memorial Day sale or maybe their "Black Friday" just even knows. Unlike Americans, we don't rush to the nearest mall before opening hours to check on the merchandise. Hey, we are Filipinos, we take our time in everything we do. Anyways, this sale season lasts until the last week of February.

I have scoured the various malls in the metro for the best deals in town. Bonaga Victoria at the upscale Greenbelt 4 as well as the other designer stores, with the exception of Louis Vuitton, have displayed their items on sale. I just can't say no to Ralph Lauren's long-sleeved shirts and cardigans, which are being offered at 40 percent off, plus an additional 15 percent for store...hunt to create deals in the time of recession.

In mid-range stores such as Mango, Springfield and Cotton On, the options are varied since they are offering full-store collections, quite perfect for the coming colder nights as predicted by PAGASA. For shoe addicts like me, I

RALPH Lauren pants shirts at 40 percent off

ADIDAS shoes in candy colors at 30 percent off

RALPH Lauren wool pullovers and cotton cardigans at 40 percent off

ADIDAS Bounce at 30 percent off

already scored two pairs of trainers in keeping with my New Year's resolution to be fit, or rather, to be sportsthrift. Imagine buying a pair of Adidas Bounce in black patent leather at 30 percent off...sure that is convincing my hard-earned dough all the way to the last counter in shining Tower Center. Stella McCartney items are also being sold at 70 percent off.

Always remember, it pays to be patient. Never buy items on regular price; it will only break your heart to find out that they will be on sale after a few days or weeks. Don't rush to find all items on sale, just prompt prices of the brand you are looking for shopping. It is not only therapeutic and good for one's soul, it also helps the sagging retail business.

Vanilla for Valentino's

THIS VALENTINE'S DAY, CATCH THE RAIN of your dreams by using Bench & Fly's Vanilla Vine collection.

Its shower gel is infused with cellular vera which is known for its antiseptic and moisturizing benefits. Body Soft contains Dead Sea salts from Israel, which leaves skin smooth and glowing. Body milk has shea butter and aloe vera which keeps skin soft.

Bench & Fly is located at Robinsons Galleria and SM Megamall B. Its products are also available at Crossings and Landmark department stores.

Glycolic peel

A segment of Avon's innovative ANEW Skincare brand, ANEW Clinical is a line of targeted skin treatments that resurface, lift, firm, plump and de-age skin with near-surgical precision.

Introducing the new ANEW Clinical Advanced Retexturizing Peel, an effective and easy treatment that restores skin's radiance and youth. In just one step, it peels away dullness and visible age damage so healthy skin cells can surface. Call 884-3556 or visit www.avon.com.ph.

Charming jewelry

Bonaki jewelry salons presents its new collection, Charming Memories. It showcases feminine charms and pendants made in yellow gold and vibrant tapestries embellished with brilliant-faceted gems.

The Charming Memories collection has fabric miniature charm bags made of cowhide and crocodile leather, pearl solitaire rings with real diamonds and marquetta necklaces with pearl chokers.

Bonaki stores are located at The Podium in Ortigas and SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City. Call 634-1736 and 556-0134.

Avon's new makeup

The stylishness and appeal of the Avon line of makeup products are carried well by its global celebrity endorser Reese Witherspoon, and no less than one of local show business' most beautiful women, Angel Locsin, as the local counterpart.

With its complete line of cosmetics, Avon has a woman covered as far as her makeup needs are concerned—from silky-matte foundation, luscious lipstick and lip gloss, eye-defining eye shadow set and mascara, to long-lasting blusher.

Fullerlife's new scent

Fullerlife Direct Selling Philippines Inc. at Nos.'s Mysterious Lies de Cologne. The new fragrance fragrance has flowery notes peppered with fresh green.

Take his breath away with Mysterious Perfumed Body Powder, which also keeps your skin fresh and clean all day. For skin that's soft, lather Mysterious Skin Softening Cream all over your body. Keep Mysterious Fragrance Refreshr handy for instant mom's eye-any-time. Call toll-free from the 1-800-10-FULLER (1-800-10-385537-1).

Pre-Valentine's cosmetic finds

DURING A BRIEF VACATION in San Francisco, I discovered certain cosmetic finds are cheaper here than the US. This information will come in handy during your Valentine's date.

Aveda-cosmetics' hero has to be that its makeup stays perfectly pristine for long periods of time, unfazed by perspiration and a very oily skin that is also prone to redness and irritation.

Aveda's Shake-up Primer with SPF 15 is the first of its kind. It's a dual-layer booster and serum free of mineral oil or animal ingredients. It should be shaken well before use so that emulsified layer containing spherical powders, which help the foundation to cling better, will mix with the "water-based layer," which contains moisturizing, soothing and anti-inflammatory ingredients.

Designed to be applied using tapping motions, the Primer makes the skin more ready to absorb the skincare ingredients of Aveda's Hydra-Texa Formulations. The Primer contains Tyvaloxa, an ingredient found in cactus which helps the skin hold on to its moisture supply even in the arid desert. The Syringodenia is also responsible for a dehydrated mushroom's ability to instantly absorb more than its weight in water when soaked. Remember to pat, not rub, on so you do not end up with white particles on skin.

Aveda Face Powder feels weightless and looks as if you have nothing on, just perfect poreless skin. It contains rose hip oil as an emollient, Vitamin E, which promotes blood flow, water-cress extract as an anti-inflammatory, and Shea Butter to absorb UV rays.

Since this powder is high on moisture compared to most, it smoothly spreads on and blends with the skin's surface so you get an even but thin film. Even when you perspire, it won't form a cakey feel as it blends with the water, giving a radiant dewy effect instead of a starched doll look. The same powder is blended with the right proportion of oil-absorbing powders to oily skins and huge pores are controlled for hours. The perfect complement to the makeup primer/booster/serum. It remains in skin that looks radiant and clear, that's high on moisture but with almost zero oil. Skin looks dewy, clear and courageous.

MAKEOVER 911
Kirsty Salas

Laura Mercier

Laura Mercier's limited-edition Master Tool Box is what I consider the workhorse purchase for a lip and eye palette as the colors may be used all year round and can take you from office to evening. The price is not obscenely expensive; the rectangular compact does can fit into any purse without weighing it down. The selection can be mixed and matched for unlimited color possibilities.

The five lip colors are mostly creme formulas, save for Brunette, which is a shimmer. You from 1Before pink nude), Pink Champagne (cool rose pink), Cinnamon (warm brown), Amaretto (mauve pink bronze) and Grape (crème purple red).

All are very versatile for a wide range of skin tones and each one comes with a lip brush.

For the eye palette, there is a mini Black Violet Sold eye pencil which looks wonderful on brunettes, plus an eye color/contour brush for effortless eye-shadow application.

The five eye-shadow colors are Morning Dew (light neutral pink), Rose (rose gold), Fresco (neutral beige brown), Chocolate, and Twilight Gray (blue gray purple), mostly matte save for Rose Gold.

Close lovers will love the Lip Glazes, especially if they enjoy the scent of baked goods as the glazes smell like sugar or caramel depending on the shade name. They contain antioxidants, anti-aging and plumping ingredients, so lips not only look fuller and ridge-free, they are also smoother and softer. The universally flattering Gala (a sheer cranberry) looks like dark chocolate on the vial, but goes like a sheer berry-brown. (Think Clinique's Black Honey, which is only available in the US.)

AVAKE makeup primer, available at Rustan's

Aveda available at Rustan's. Laura Mercier available at Sa-ranham.

E-mail: kirstysalas@yahoo.com

Friends remember Ernest on 1st death anniversary

ERNEST Santiago as maverick designer in the '70s

By Gino Escudero
Lifestyle Reader

ERNEST SANTIAGO'S first death anniversary was marked with a quiet gathering in his Pagsanjan, Laguna, residence, scene of the crime that robbed Manila's design community of one of its brightest lights.

Friends who had rushed to the scene on Dec. 16, 2007, remarked how different the weather was then from this December 2008. The day of Ernest's passing was wet, cold and as miserable as the face that befell him. In contrast, his anniversary was marked by bright, cloudless skies and cooled by a steady (but heavenly) breeze fragrant with Cha Kinnes.

Ernest's sisters, Loudes-Isaval Mann and Dagsan resident Nene, hosted a quiet day of remembrance and prayers for friends and neighbors who remembered. They served the guests fare that would entice many to make the long drive to Laguna, served by

SANTIAGO'S distinctive collectibles remain in his Pagsanjan home, surrounding his last perches.

SANTIAGO at a young man

THE GARDEN he tended diligently is maintained.

FRIENDS and kin gather at Santiago's dining table during his first death anniversary last December.

Beanie in his restaurant was familiar-sharp Cuyo accepted by classic pesto (collagen spaghetti), poke salad and a very savory and rich (it supposing) lobby.

Guests wandered through the antiques house and gardens, which are still well-maintained and bear the unmistakable Ernest Santiago touches but now seem so empty, missing his presence, consistent floating and green thumb. Only the bridal shower vines does (land one wall more in full bloom, their short-lived, fragile white flowers creeping to clench of delicate fragrance for one day every six months. They blossomed in time to celebrate the memory of Ernest.

THE AUTHOR with Cora Rosca, one of Santiago's good friends who now leads tailors in her garden Pila, Laguna, after years of work in design and culture circles

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Editor Ermie G. Velarde

ENTERTAINMENT

Lesbian? No way!

LOS ANGELES—SINGER KELLY CLARKSON, currently at the top of the US pop charts, said on Monday she was not a lesbian but sometimes wished she was because "often times men are very hard for me." The "American Idol" first winner said Wednesday she was disappointed by a young naked if she was secretly gay. Reuters

OVERHEARD

Get hooked on great fashion, for less!

GREENHILLS CLEARANCE FAIR

Cool fashion finds + super bargain deals

'til March 8.

+ FILINT

BILLY Crawford

Why 'bad boy' Billy fell for nice gal Nikki

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

IT'LL BE A HECTIC 2009 for international pop star Billy Crawford who will be jetting in and out of the country for a stay with Sarah Geronimo in the US, and with Akan and Sino all over the globe.

With all the plane-hopping, love will be find the time for his new sweetheart, singer-actress and "MAP" and "Star Song" co-star Nikki Gil?

The answer is time management, says Billy.

Apart from his love life, Billy also has to nurture his relationship with his two dads—biological father Jack Crawford, who's now living in Hawaii and with his adoptive father Alec Jr. because "Nikki" topped all the categories in the VG.

"It's a wonderful life," she said. "God knows that all I want to do is my remaining years is to maintain acting." Although, she added: "Im proud that at my age producers still hire me for movies and TV shows."

Intro turned 44 last Nov. 23.

CONTINUED

DID YOU KNOW...

THE ASIAN TV Awards has come up with a list of 10 things Manila or Asia can do to rediscover. Apolinario should be at least 18 years old, articulate in Tagalog or English and can handle basic computer work. Send a bio-data with photo and contact numbers to Asian TV Volunteers, 833 De Larrazabal Street, Legaspi Heights, Q. C.

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Screen legend ecstatic over 3rd Best Actress for 'Adela'

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

CALLING FROM HER HOME IN Alabang, screen legend Anita Linda couldn't contain her excitement upon learning that she won best actress for 'Adela' from the Young Critics Circle... her third citation, after the Cinemalaya and Gawad Tanglaw for the same film.

"I never expected that Adela' would make all these beautiful things possible for me and for the rest of the cast and crew."

She is especially thrilled for director Adolfo Alix Jr. because "Adela" topped all the categories at the YCC.

"It's a wonderful life," she said. "God knows that all I want to do is my remaining years is to maintain acting." Although, she added: "Im proud that at my age producers still hire me for movies and TV shows."

Intro turned 44 last Nov. 23.

CONTINUED

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MIRACLE ANSWER FROM FRANCE

MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

Statuesque Star and Powerful Politico

SHOCKING CELEBS: ETC. sculptor Star is baking Robert to Powerful Politico old enough

so he has parents. Wait, PP is a friend of Sir parents!

NOW ON ITS 2ND WEEK

MOVIE G ALL AGES ADMITTED

SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIENDS

Divel's vote

Shella Mae Quintos, talent subunit of her "Women Single" clude GO-GO—Mark Bautista, Rabel Bonell, Jan Ardia, Alfred Vargas and Paolo Contis—is the most appealing to her. "Big Bang (panel!)! Ladies hard abs, muscles, gorgeous, may sa rest."

The month's climaxin, Joey Reyes, says of his bubbly star: "Gusto ng publication niya. It's not that you meet someone who cares so much about the people she works with and doesn't worry so much about the profit. I can't wait to work with her again."

RUSHES SPECIAL

Happy birthdays!

Celebrity birthday boys and girls this month:

Feb. 1: Ani-K, Gian Carla Torre; Feb. 3: Dumbo Mia, Monta and Nene Ricks' Rhap Salazar; Feb. 6: Chad Pembe; Feb. 7: Luis Alandy; Feb. 8: Champ Lui Nye;

Feb. 12: Jose Manalo; Feb. 13: Raphael Montinola; Feb. 14: Nonong Guinoo, John Prats; Feb. 16: Claudia Grunes; Feb. 17: Al Perez; Feb. 19: Empress Schuck;

Feb. 20: Bernadette Allyson; Feb. 22: Chano Hilvers; Feb. 24: Stacey Castillejos; Feb. 27: Alex-is Ramos, Megan Young.

Ride-ic Retreat

LOS ANGELES—Christian Bale can be heard in a comely outlawed audio delivering a long, profanity-laced verbal thrashing to a cinematographer and anyone who tried to calm him down on the set of the upcoming movie "Terminator Salvation." The three-minute clip was posted Monday on the Web site TMZ.com and has become a viral sensation on the Internet—and spawned a dance mash remix of the audio tape.

In it, the actor who portrayed Batman in "The Dark Knight" rails against cinematographer Shane Hurlbut for apparently walking behind co-star Bryce Dallas Howard and cheesy Zale's line of sight, considered a film no-no. "If you do it one more time I ain't walking on that set if you're still hired!" Bale howls in one of the less publishable statements.

Later, he surmised, "Do you want

SUPA Hot Queries and Related Search Glitch: Joey was impressed.

me to go and trash your lights? Why are you making my sweat?"

The harshest took place last July on the set in Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, days before Bale wed Christian sound designer Sibi his mother and sister in London. Charges were not filed. AP

Mocking Avians?

LOS ANGELES—Disney teen idol Miley Cyrus has been accused of mocking Asians by making derogatory poses in a personal photograph with friends. A snapshot of Cyrus, 15, star of the Disney Channel show "Hannah Montana," and friends posing with an Asian friend and pulling their eyes sideways surfaced on the Internet this week. disney

S.T.A. LUCIA EAST GRAND MALL

THEATRE

1	LOVE HAPPENS PG-13	6	MARLEY & ME PG-13
2	GRAN TORINO R-18	7	UNDERWORLD 3 R-13
3	AUSTRALIA PG-13	8	SEVEN POUNDS PG-13
4	BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA PG	9	BRIDESMAID II PG-13
5	MILK R-13	10	MARLEY & ME PG-13

NOW SHOWING

POWER PLANT CINEMA

DOUBT – PG13	SEVEN POUNDS – PG13	BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA/ UNDERDOG – GP
AUSTRALIA – PG13	MILK – R13	MARLEY AND ME -PG13

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 MARLEY AND ME PG-13 1:30, 4:10, 6:40, 9:20

2 SEVEN POUNDS PG-13 1:15, 3:50, 6:25, 9:00

3 MILK R-13 1:10, 3:40, 6:10, 8:40

4 UNDERWORLD 3 R-18 2:20, 4:50, 7:05, 9:20

BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA GP 2:00, 4:10

YES MAN PG-13 6:40, 9:00

New Zealand Embassy APEC Photo Exhibit

February 6 to 14, 2009 Exhibit Area, Level 3

Shangri-La Mall

Screen legend...

Agnes Monteverde

Apart from the ABS-CBN soap opera "Tayong Dalawa," she is starring in two indie movies: Jose Javier Reyes' "Smoking" with Emilio Garcia and Snooky Serna; and Mes Cleto Ayo "Annanseng" with Alfred Vargas.

In "Smoking," she said, "I play a grandmother who's pimping her own flesh and blood. I wouldn't have to wear some of the skimpiest lines, but I had to."

In "Annanseng," a period thriller set in 1927, the role struggled with long lines to perfect Tagalog. She said it was like going back to the set of a family

BILLY Crawford with SHAI GU

Why 'bad boy'...

Agnes Monteverde

then I know she's busy with school or work.

How do you propose to sustain your relationship when you are abroad most months?

Number one is communication. Whatever your relationship is—whether it's friendly or romantic—you have to work to keep it strong. Communication and trust are the secrets. We both love talking on the phone.

What are Nikki's endearing traits?

She's an angel... she's sweet, actually, she's a big blessing in my life.

As opposites you?

Introverts. I'm not the devil.

You played a possessed boy in "The Exorcist."

Hahaha! Like me, Nikki's hardworking. But unlike me, she's smart. Well, she's book smart; it's street-smart. Another thing we share is that we value family.

How's your dad?

He's getting better. Luckily, his throat cancer was just in its early stage. He had an operation and is now back in the US for further tests.

How has your dad's illness changed your relationship with him?

My dad and I never had a major quarrel, as in other families, we've had little misunderstandings, but I always knew that he's just trying to protect me. He has always been supportive and accepting. When I found out he was sick, I got sad. But I have to be strong for him.

How are you and Regie Santos?

We had dinner recently. We're OK now. I do wish worry about his health, too. But he seemed healthy the last time we talked. I'm just glad that our kids (Nikki's sons Hakim Regie) are and all is well. It's a great way to start the new year.

E-mail: bgonzalez@abs-cbn.com

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

THEATRE MALL

1 2

PROMENADE

3 4 5

WATCH SCREEN & MATCH

Araneta Center

Cubao X

Gateway Mall

Farmers Market

Cubao's

superstar

Superstar CINEPLEX 10

Glorietta

PLATINUM

MARLEY & ME 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30	AUSTRALIA 1:00, 6:00	MILK 12:40, 3:20, 6:20, 9:00	MARLEY & ME 11:00, 2:00, 4:50, 7:30, 10:10	MARLEY & ME 1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30
MY BLOODY VALENTINE 1:50, 4:20, 7:00, 9:30	DOUBT 12:00, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:40	FELICIA 1:00, 7:30	UNDERWORLD 3 1:20, 3:50, 6:40, 7:30, 10:00	SEVEN POUNDS 12:00, 2:30, 4:50, 7:10, 9:50

MALL CINEPLEX 4

SEVEN POUNDS 1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30	MARLEY & ME 12:30, 3:00, 5:40, 8:00, 10:30	SINGLE 12:30, 2:30, 4:30, 6:30, 8:30	MY BLOODY VALENTINE 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00

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GRAN TORINO

Key changes on AI meant to boost show's popularity

THE EIGHTH SEASON OF "AMERICAN Idol" has launched its 2009 search for new singing stars—and to lord its renowned popularity with viewers (after its 8-percent dip last year). The reality of declining ratings has prompted the idol's producers to make some significant changes to help make up for the slack.

The most obvious innovation is the entry of a fourth judge to the roster of singer-songwriter Kara DioGuardi. Viewing the 2009 edition's early telecast, we immediately saw that Randy nailed her allowed the fifth "power balance" in a smart way.

In the past, the standard scenario went something like: Steven Cowell was the show's resident curmudgeon and sporadic scourge, and Paula was all heart and "nicely" subjectively and "encouraging" words to helpers.

Well, that tends to get too pat and predictable after some years, so a fourth judge in the person of Kara DioguardI has been added to shake up the status quo—and that, she definitely has.

It's significant that, aside from being an acclaimed musician, Kara is also a looker, speaks candidly and well, and is her own person.

Older jurors' equal

Thus, without calling undue attention to herself, she's become the older jurors' equal—an important achievement because Simon, Randy and Paula are definitely no youngsters.

It's also interesting to note that Kara has shifted Paula's status in the group dynamic. Paula was the sole female judge, and she gave her a unique cachet—which she must now share with the younger Kara.

How is Paula taking it? No obvious signs of resentment have been forthcoming to date. It helps that Paula and Kara have been friends for years, but things could change as Kara starts bond with greater confidence and savvy.

Unexpectedly, however, Kara has of late been stealing Paula's thunder in the group thumbs-down

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THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL
12:00 PM

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GALLERIA

1 DOUBT	6 UNDERWORLD 3
2 MARLEY & ME	7 STATUS: SINGLE
3 MY BLOODY VALENTINE	8 [illegible]
4 MILK	9 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA / AUSTRALIA
5 SEVEN POUNDS	10 INKHEART

ERMITA

1 AUSTRALIA

2 MILK	6 INKHEART
3 MARLEY & ME	7 MY BLOODY VALENTINE
4 UNDERWORLD 3	8 SAW V / STATUS: SINGLE
5 SEVEN POUNDS	9 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA

METRO EAST

1 MY BLOODY VALENTINE	5 SAW V
2 SEVEN POUNDS	6 UNDERWORLD 3
3 MARLEY & ME	7 INKHEART
4 YES MAN	8 STATUS: SINGLE

NOVALICHES

1 SEVEN POUNDS	4 STATUS: SINGLE
2 UNDERWORLD 3	
3 MARLEY & ME	

PIONEER

1 SEVEN POUNDS	3 MARLEY & ME
2 INKHEART	4 MY BLOODY VALENTINE

STA. ROSA

1 UNDERWORLD 3	4 MARLEY AND ME
2 TRANSPORTER 3	
3 THE ABANDONED	

LIPA

1 SAW V	3 YES MAN
2 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY	4 STATUS: SINGLE

DASMARINAS

1 STATUS: SINGLE	3 MARLEY AND ME
2 SEVEN POUNDS	4 UNDERWORLD 3

IMUS

1 MARLEY AND ME	3 STATUS: SINGLE
2 UNDERWORLD 3	4 SEVEN POUNDS

ANGELES

1 UNDERWORLD 3	3 SAW V
2 BRIDE WARS	4 TRANSPORTER 3

STARMILLS

1 BRIDE WARS	4 STATUS: SINGLE
2 LOVE ME AGAIN	5 UNDERWORLD 3
3 THE ABANDONED	6 TRANSPORTER 3

BACOLOD

1 THE HAUNTING of MOLLY HARTLEY	5 SAW V
2 SAW V	6 BRIDE WARS
3 BRIDE WARS	7 STATUS: SINGLE
4 INKHEART	8 INKHEART
5 THE CURIOUS CASE of BENJAMIN BUTTON	9 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA
6 STATUS: SINGLE	10 AUSTRALIA

ILOILO

1 YES MAN	4 STATUS: SINGLE
2 SAW V	5 INKHEART
3 BRIDE WARS	6 BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA
	7 AUSTRALIA

Fall Out Boy's Patrick Stump is a great vocal mimic

THE TITLE OF FALL OUT Boy's fifth album, "Folie à Deux" (IDJC), is a psychiatric term that translates to "the shared madness of two."

"When two people with independent neuroses come together, they seem to become exponentially crazier," explains the band's 26-year-old singer and rhythm guitarist, Patrick Stump.

Take Five

Stump, together with bandist Pete Wentz, drummer Andy Hurley and lead guitarist Joe Trohman are set to perform on feb. 13 at the Answer Coliseum.

On the album's 13 tracks of jubilatory, punk-infused pop, the emo-supernium explores themes of adultery, materialism and vanity, and how stardom can make people go completely mad.

Excerpts from a recent interview with Stump:

Before you were born, your father was involved in the Otterville scandal.

He tried. My dad was kind of a peripheral character in '80s and '70s players like John Prine and Steve Goodman. He was always playing around the house the signature licks jukebox

He based you are a great vocal mimic.

I got into singing by accident, because I was an impressionist. I started out by doing an Elvis Costello impression. I can do a good Tom Waits and a good Prince. I was really fearful about singing in front of people, but when you're making a joke of it, it's a completely different story. I remember the first Fall Out Boy show, I couldn't even sing.

THE BAND (from L): Andy Hurley, Pete Wentz, Joe Trohman and Patrick Stump, all set for their Feb. 13 concert at the Big Dome.

On the new album, do you attempt to impersonate anyone?

On "What a Catch, Donnie," I sing really deep, and I was like, "Whoa, I'm just impersonating David Bowie." All of a sudden I had a falsetto scream.

Obviously you've become more comfortable performing.

When we were nominated for a Grammy [in 2008], I remember being there and saying, "I don't belong here." Elvis Costello was sitting across from you, and Stevie Wonder was up onstage, and I said, "I need to sing my game up, pronto. I don't feel comfortable!"

Who inspired you the most?

Our Bedding going bathroom, where he's really going for it. Gets teased always in key, but he was always singing the right way. "These Arms of Mine" is one of the most perfect recordings ever. That's the kind of stuff you might get once in a lifetime.

What are your favorite Pete Wentz lyrics on the album?

"I will never believe in anything again" — I think it was written when Bush was reelected. I love the simplicity of a line that simple.

We thought you guys were all straight-edge, but Pete was photographed recently drinking alcohol.

Pete got older, and I'm legal now, but we're still not a partying band. It's too busy to get drunk.

What goes through your head when you read How Stupid a question like, "I want Fall Out Boy to be the biggest band in the world"?

That's not a goal of mine. But I don't want to be the guy that feels like bad when what he wrote

From the 'worst actress' to *Sundance sensation*

Mariah says bye 'Glitter,' hello 'Push'

LOS ANGELES—MARIAH Carey has gone from defending to one of the worst pictures of the year 2001 to a movie that was a critical and audience sensation in the recent Sundance Film Festival.

We, Mariah may owe Precious the upcoming of "Glitter," which earned a Razzie Award nomination for the Worst Picture of the Year and gave her a Worst Actress prize. She is in the cast of "Push," based on the novel by Sapphire, which was a big hit in Sundance and won the jury and audience awards. It was only the third time in the 25-year history of the festival that the same movie captured both prizes.

Mariah, along with her co-stars — Mo'Nique, Gabourey "Gabby" Sidibe, Lenny Kravitz and Paula Patton — are winning rave reviews. "Push: Based on the Novel by Sapphire" is no good than Oprah Winfrey and Tyler Perry, though their respective companies, have jumped in to help [Lionsgate— which nabbed the film's distribution rights—promote the movie.

Mariah quoted Oprah as saying about the drama: "I've never seen anything like it. The intensity of 'Push: Based on the Novel by Sapphire' I knew I wanted to do what ever I could to encourage other people to see this movie. The film is so raw and powerful—it ignites open."

Amazing movie

In an earlier interview, Mariah was already jazzed up about the movie which is set to be combined with "Push," a sci-fi thriller which stars Chris Evans and Dakota Fanning. The music superstar who has had the worst hit 3 songs movies more than Billy Bradley] and spent the most time on top of the Billboard charts (surpassing the record of the Beatles) told us, "Push: Based on the Novel by Sapphire' is an amazing movie that I'm really proud to be a part of."

Mariah, who also starred opposite Eminem in her other new indie film, "Tennessee," formerly distributed the actress that "Push: Based ..." would get in Sundance: "Everybody's amazing in this movie — Mo'Nique, Gabby Sidibe and Lenny Kravitz. They are phenomenal. I was really thankful to be part of the cast. The film is set in New York and is about a girl who goes through a lot of abuse. I play a social worker named Miss Weiss."

The movie, directed by Lee Daniels, is about an overweight, illiterate teen in Harlem, who is pregnant with her second child, and who is invited to enroll in an alternative school.

"We made a deep movie," the singer-turner said. "The subject matter is so intense that it's really from an entirely different mindset. It couldn't be more opposite from 'Tennessee.'" The latter film, narrates the journey of two brothers (played by Adam Rothenberg and Elliott Peck, Gregory Peck's grandson), one of whom is terminally ill, who meet an aspiring singer (Mariah) along the way.

Indie route

Of her infamous "Glitter," Mariah said, "The film came out on Sept. 11, 2001. There couldn't have been a worse day. It was like anything that could go wrong with that movie went wrong. What I'm doing with 'Tennessee' and 'Push,' is that I'm going the route of independent movies. I really didn't want to go the other way the first time. It is just so happened that people were always like, 'We need to put her in something where she's playing a star.' It was kind of put upon me, rather than allowing me to do what I really wanted, which was to lose myself, fall into a character and really be an actress. ... And the layers of who I am and all of that."

Mariah, who has penned Mariah's performance in "Push: Based..." pointed out how she is almost unrecognizable in the film. She relished being able to change her into a character and not be Mariah Carey, the sexy glam singer. "For especially, 'We really may be all of us to fall into that vanity thing when you're doing this as style, but in doing these two movies, I had to throw all that [vanity] aside ... In 'Push ...,' Lee [Daniels], the director, actually wanted me to cut more before the movie to gain weight."

Brutal kid

Steve "Tennessee" subtles handily dysfunction and sacrifices, among other themes, Mariah was asked for her thoughts on those topics. "Like some of us, I once was a dysfunctional abusive when I was growing up," revealed the star whose parents are Patricia Hickey, an Irish-American, and Alfred Roy Carey, an African-American. "My mom made a lot of sacrifices. She was a classically trained singer and she worked really hard. She went to Juilliard. She left her small town in Illinois when she was 16, met my father and embarked on an interracial marriage at a time when it wasn't the thing to do. Both my parents sacrificed a lot."

The youngest girl to the family admitted that even in the 1970s, it was tough being a multiracial kid.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Roberto V. Nepales

"It was very difficult, color barrier," she revealed. "I didn't know what I was. I have an older brother and sister who were like not they weren't there [in the house] so for me, it was a journey of self-discovery, trying to figure out who I was and who I should. I relate to — my white coushes or my father, an African-American. It was strange. But just to see artists going on now with the world, it clear give me hope as a multiracial person."

Her stint as a biracial kid was aggravated by her family's frequent moving around. "It was an identity crisis for me as a kid, people not knowing how to put a name on what they felt I was. Plus I grew up moving around a lot with my mother. Everything would change, depending on what type of neighborhood I lived in. ... Being poor always an adjustment period that happened."

Mariah, whose "Glitter" came on the heels of a hospital stay when she suffered a physical and emotional breakdown, swallowed. "I did have to go through a whole journey in terms of healing myself and dealing with the pain. Having that surrounded me before in my life. I don't want to sound too dramatic about that but it was a cliff, rub thing for me to go through. I think everything happens for a reason. It was one of those circumstances where whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger process."

Directed since April last year to rapper and actor Nick Cannon, Mariah declared with a smile, "I definitely feel most complete than before. There's a void when you don't feel like you've found the other part of who you are. I'm in a different place right now that's more complete."

"People were definitely surprised that we got married so quickly," Mariah said about her whirlwind romance with Nick, who is 10 years her junior (but co-husband, record exec Tommy Mottola, was 20 years her senior). "Everybody else was very open and freaked out about it than we were. We were like, 'This is normal, this seemed like it was the right thing to do.' It just seemed natural to us. It wasn't anything out of the ordinary in our book. I know it was shocking to the rest of the world, our friends and families."

Camp Mariah

Asked to give an update about her camp for underprivileged children in New York, she answered, "Camp Mariah is still going. It's still a great place for 600 kids a year, with 300 kids each session. I didn't get to go up this month- but you but 'Its looking forward to it this year — it's a sweet sweetness camp where kids can go and learn about their options in life. A lot of the kids are from inner-cities who have never left their homes. They get to experience life in another setting. They learn about different potential jobs. But it's not a boring camp. The kids who go there really want to learn and expand their horizons. The camp has brought me a lot of joy."

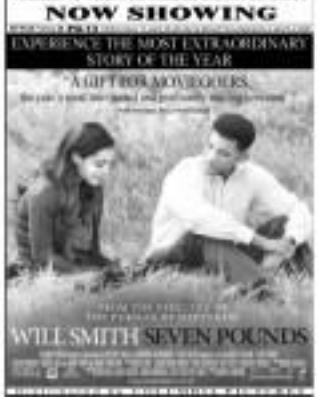
Complimented for her voluptuous figure in an age where she seems in a ride-thin shape, Mariah said, "I've come to terms with the fact that I have and going to look like everyone else. It's one of those things where you have to be strong enough within yourself."

So how does the singer known for her five-octave range relax? "I take a bath," she mused with a laugh. "That's my favorite thing. I love long baths and relaxing with candle light — that type of thing. After that, you'll see what happens but it's definitely about a long, scrumptious bath."

As raising children in the agenda? "Well see," Mariah replied with a smile.

E-mail the columnist at rvnapales and read his blog "The Napales Report," on http://blogs.inquirer.net/napalesreport.

Mariah Carey "unrecognizable" in new movie.



LIVING Stars

Editor Ernesto G. Yolardo

Jeans and flip-flops girl

By Marinel R. Cruz
Photos by Jun Gonio-Fernandez

OFF-CAMERA SEXY Katrina Halili would rather not wear the eye-popping outfits she's known for.

"When I'm not working, I prefer tank tops with jeans, or baby-doll dresses, in fashion and mine," Katrina told Living Stars during a visit to her dance-fashionista condo unit in San Juan.

She once got a scolding from her Kapuso bosses for always being in flip-flops instead of the requisite high-heeled shoes.

The two-time PBB Philippines' Season Woman has a huge collection of, believe it or not, Barbie dolls and fashion accessories.

Kat also prefers baby colognes to perfumes. "I'm not into dropping, (clues)" added the "Gagambino" star. "I'd rather spend my money on massages, facial treatments and body scrubs."

RAT has her own line of swimsuits called Playmates.

OVERSIZED studs are her latest preference.

D&G skinnies are her favorite jeans.

SHE started collecting Barbie dolls and icons eleven years ago, to the surprise of friends.

SHE finds sexiest, she says, in halter mini-dresses.

SHE'D really rather wear flip-flops. These high heels are a requisition of the job.

Shoes

I prefer peep-toe shoes to other styles. My current favorite is this blue pair from Louis Vuitton. It's the first expensive pair that I bought. Honestly, I like wearing slippers more than shoes.

Knick-knacks

I used to have a doll house in my condo unit. (Dad) let go of it because I needed the space. I started collecting Barbie dolls and items in 2006. I don't have any reason for that, naisipan lang ako. I wasn't into dolls when I was younger. Kaya nagulat ang lahat.

I decided on a Chinese-inspired Chog pin as it's very familiar with the area. It's where I buy all my feng shui stuff. For instances, I have a bundle of good luck charms. I was born in the year of the Ox so I expect this year to be good for me.

Scents

I'm a big fan of Nemesis Shiby Cologne. I'm not really into the more manner scents, but if I need to wear one I go for florals.

Bags

Jo Ueki Belo gifted me with a Louis Vuitton bag, but my super favorite is this gold (I) that a Los Angeles-based friend gave me last Christmas. I recently bought myself a Burberry clutch. Safe naman ang preggy. I just thought, I've been working for five years so I should buy something nice for myself. I also like the classiness of my Prada bag. It never goes out of style.

Dresses/Tops

I wore this piece (shown a halter mini-dress) when I was first voted as PBB's Season in 2006. Ultra Stereo made it. I tend to go for only one design when it comes to any outfit because I know what looks good on me. The green color does from mine boys to one of my customers in "Gagambino," etc.

Swim suits

Most of my swim suits are tailor-made. You really have to know what looks good on you. I like maillots. I can't wear the keyhole type because it makes me look fat. Only the string bikini is perfect for me. Especially ones more than 50 pesos ones.

Bottoms

I love wearing jeans, especially my skinny jeans from D&G and Guess. Small na small sila. I can wear them with almost anything in my closet. I'm thankful when skinny jeans became fashionable again. I don't look good in bootleg and elephant pants.

Eyewear

My favorite right now is my pair of Michael Kors. I like my eyewear to be so big that it covers my face.

Cosmetics

I use only Bite—nakasanayan ko na kasi. I use Maybelline mascara. I know how to apply any new make-up but I feel more confident if someone does it for me. (Christine Bersa was Kat's make-up artist for this pictorial.)

CHARINA SUZARA

MY FAVORITE BOOK: SHE CARITT'S "Queen of Babble," to know the sexual ventures of an American college girl looking for Mr. Right in Europe. This book teaches you that not taking life seriously has damaging effects. This is an enjoyable read, especially when you're on the beach. Marinel R. Cruz

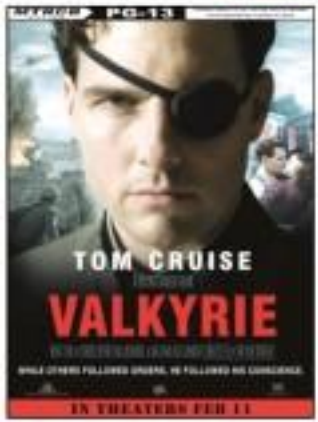
BOOKS

ROBI DOMINGO

I'M NOW READing "12 Steps to a Better Memory" (by Carol Turkington) and "1,000 Words to Make You Sound Smart" (by the Editors of the American Heritage Dictionary). My dad (Dr. Robert Domingo) recommended these (left) books to me. He wants me and my brothers to master the English language. Marinel Sara Diego A.

MARY GRACE PERIDO

THE BOOK "CONVERSATIONS WITH God" by Neil Donald Walsh schools us answer all our questions about our Maker. The answers are here. I like what I've read so far. I'm beginning to realize God's plans for me. Marinel R. Cruz



61st annual Directors Guild America Awards in LA, Jan. 31